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ABSTRACT

Noting that the fragmented approach to early childhood education in the United States has resulted in enormous variability in program quality, this report describes characteristics of the "ecole maternelle," the preschool system in France. The report is based upon observations made by 15 American delegates who visited 11 preschools in Paris neighborhoods of varying affluence. The report notes that nearly all 3- to 5-year-olds attend the ecole maternelle, which combines education and care for at least 8 hours a day. Highly-trained teachers form the backbone of quality, and the schools are physically impressive. The French preschools follow a national curriculum, emphasizing socialization, mathematics, and language. Schools are structured into a coherent system of financing, administration, and accountability. The national government pays for and trains teachers, and local entities pay for buildings and infrastructure. The annual costs of the ecole maternelle and before-and-after school programs are about $5,500 per child, with government paying almost the entire cost. Although American delegates were impressed by the French system's universal availability, highly trained teachers, high-quality facilities, and deep public support, they also noted characteristics that might limit U.S. application. The report concludes with the following recommendations for action in the United States: (1) promote preschool for every child; (2) clarify government roles and responsibilities; (3) train and adequately pay teachers of young children; (4) develop core principles for early childhood programs; and (5) respond to the needs of children and families. The report's three appendices include lists of site visits and meetings, biographies of the delegates, and a list of the French-American Foundation board of directors. (KB)

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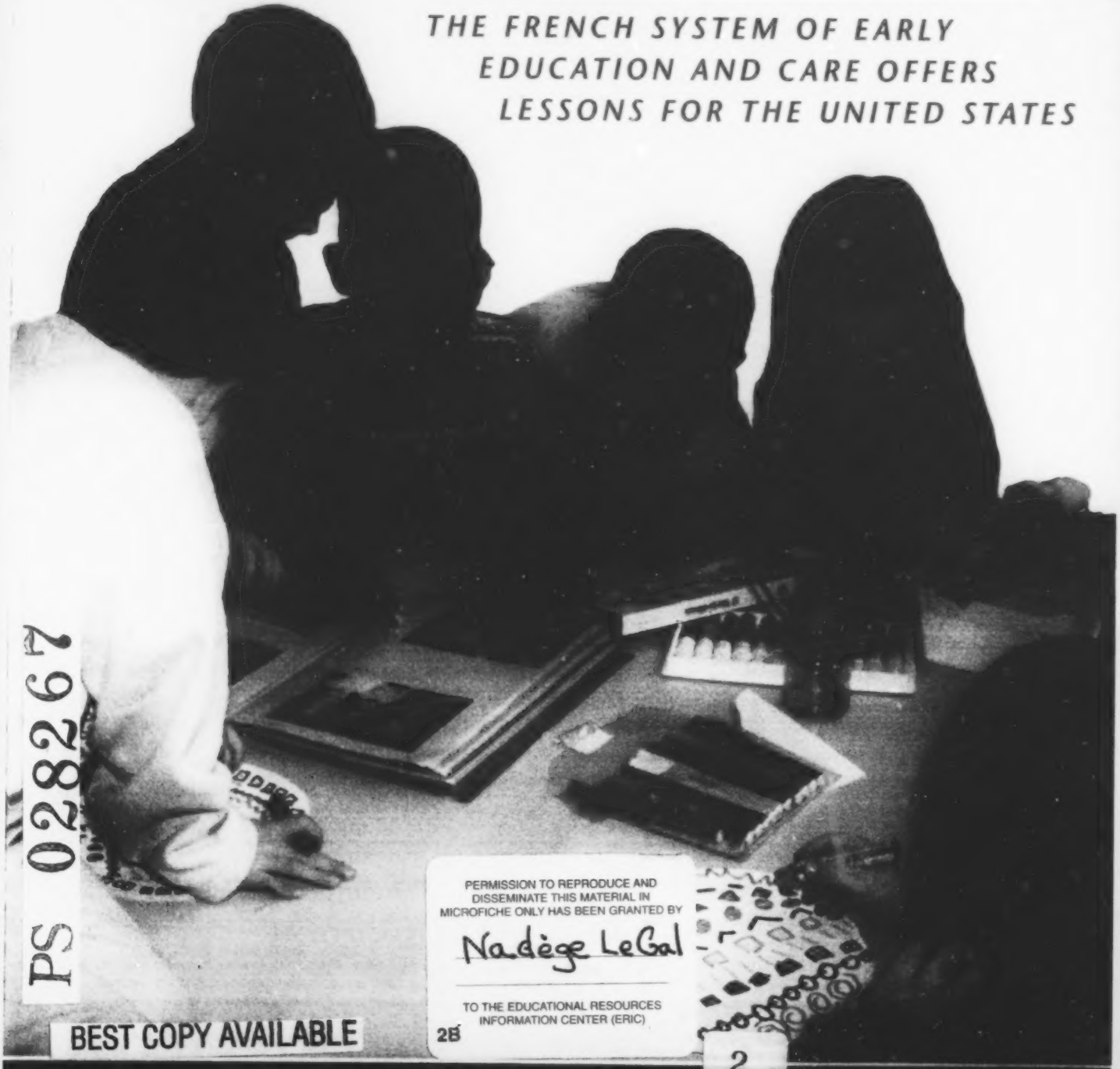

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A Welcome For Every Child III

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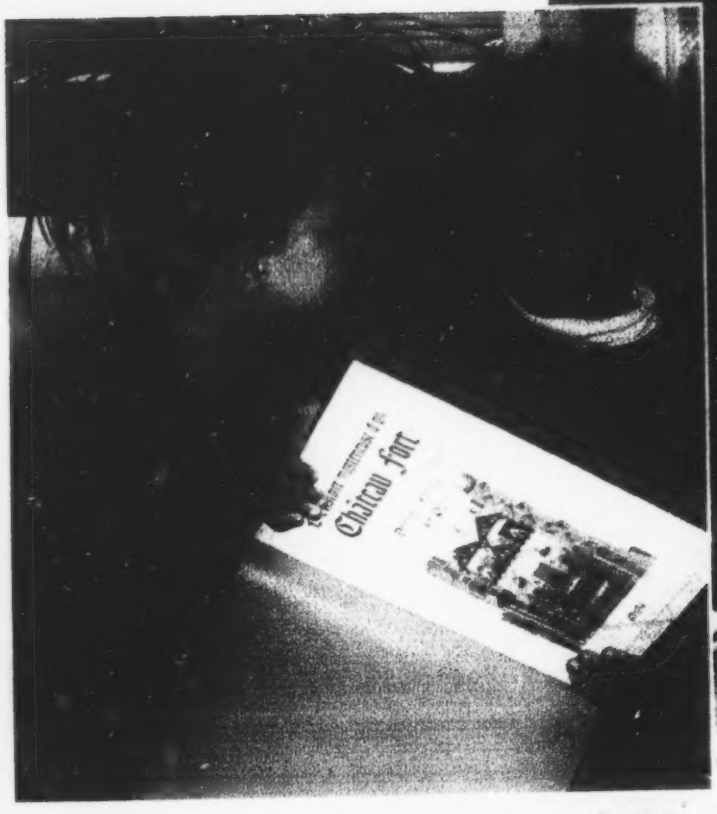

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The French System of Early Education and Care Offers Lessons for the United States

A Welcome For Every Child III

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Sheila Kamerman of Columbia University's School of Social Work acted as Senior Project Advisor to the Foundation and enabled us again to benefit from her wealth of knowledge concerning this subject as well as cross-national research in family policies.

Alumni of our 1989 Study Tour to France on Quality Child Care and of other Foundation programs led the briefing sessions for the members of this delegation in New York: LaRue Allen, New York University; Barbara Bergman, American University; Susanne Martinez, Children's Defense Fund; Faith Wohl, Child Care Action Campaign; and former FAF director Gail Richardson, Best Practices in Education, who not only developed the 1989 Study Tour as well as one in 1994 on Maternal and Child Health, but also authored *A Welcome for Every Child I and II.*

Other alumni attended these sessions and helped to prepare the delegates: Bettye Caldwell, Arkansas Children's Hospital; Susan Cowell,

International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; David Edie, Wisconsin Department of Workforce; David Gleason, Corporate Child Care, Inc.; Elisabeth Marx (co-author of *A Welcome for Every Child I*), Mothers and Others; Evelyn Moore, National Black Child Development Institute; Barbara Reisman, Schumann Fund for New Jersey; and Gloria Rodriguez, Avance, Inc.

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In France, many experts and leaders offered invaluable input to this project. Early conceptual advice was given by Rachel Cohen, researcher at Université Paris-Nord, who also organized site visits to schools in Parisian suburbs that use technology in the class rooms and gave us the benefit of her research and contacts. She arranged for the site visits to include meetings with school directors, elected officials and national inspectors to give the delegation a comprehensive overview and introduced the Foundation to Michelle Proux, INRP.

Michelle Neuman, OECD, joined the FAF team early on as consultant and was of invaluable help in conceptualizing and organizing this project. The research conducted by her in France made this report possible. Michelle Proux was instrumental in organizing meetings at the INRP, the Ministry of Education and with Mayor Santini of Issy-les-Moulineaux. Olga Baudelot, CRESAS, has been a long-time advisor to Foundation projects. We thank her for her continuous help and for informing this delegation about the latest pedagogical research in France. Another long-term friend of the Foundation, Laurence Douvin, City Council of Paris, has been of continuous help and we thank her for all her efforts that made this project possible.

For her willingness to contribute to our work by briefing the delegates about current social events in France, we thank Sophie Body-Gendrot, Paris IV-Sorbonne.

At the Ministry of Education, Gilles Avinain welcomed us and talked about the national perspective concerning the *école maternelle*. Colette Durand, OMEP France, organized site visits in Paris. We thank the directors Madame Corteggiani, Madame Rolgen, Madame Perdriel and Madame Cozanet for welcoming us into their schools.

For sharing her knowledge about the teacher training, we are indebted to Catherine Lacronique, IUFM. For her insights on current challenges facing the *école maternelle* and her efforts to put the wealth of information collected by the delegates into perspective, we thank Catherine Delpy, CEFISEM.

Representatives of the Department of School Affairs of the City of Paris presented an important overview of the municipal responsibilities in this field. We thank Madame Martin, Monsieur Chalon, Madame Couchouron and Madame Guignard for their willingness to share their expertise and to arrange a follow-up meeting to cover additional questions with a smaller group of delegates.

We also thank the directors and staff of two *PMIs* in Paris (Chemin Vert and Vaucouleurs) as well as of the two *crèches* (Godefroy Cavaignac and Jean-Pierre Timbaud) for welcoming us into their centers and for sharing with us their wealth of experience in working with children.

The directors of the suburban schools who welcomed us and whom we thank for their generous help and hospitality: Madame Obeissart, Clichy-sous-Bois; Madame Doulay, Villejuif; Madame Senior, Fontenay-aux-Roses; Madame Chaponnet, Issy-les-Moulineaux; Madame Rousseau, Vanves; Madame Schaub, Issy-les-Moulineaux; and Monsieur Sirgény, Orly. We are also indebted to the respective inspectors who enabled us to visit these schools: Monsieur Billiers, Madame Eymeri and Monsieur Odic. For their extraordinary hospitality, we salute the

(continued)

mayors, municipal employees and people of Clichy-sous-Bois, Villejuif, Fontenay-aux-Roses, and Orly.

We are grateful to Jean Thénaisy, inspector for the Ministry of Education, who coordinated school visits in Issy-les-Moulineaux and Vanves, visits to the *crèches* in both towns, and a meeting with André Santini, Mayor of Issy-les-Moulineaux, elected city officials, directors of the schools and centers visited, and other experts in the field of early childhood education. Our special thanks to Mayor Santini for the time he spent with us and the wonderful reception he gave for the delegates.

The American Embassy in Paris arranged a reception at the Ambassador's Residence for the delegation and introduced it to the French community of early childhood education specialists. We thank Ambassador and Mrs. Felix Rohatyn for their kind welcome. Thank you as well to Miller Crouch, Minister-Counselor, Cultural Affairs; Maureen Cormack, Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer; Christiane Degueldre, Cultural Assistant; and Caroline Pacquement, Personal Assistant to Ambassador and Mrs. Rohatyn; for their assistance.

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The tireless support of Antoine le Brun, education specialist, and his sense of humor helped us many times to proceed with the project and to keep a clear perspective.

The French-American Foundation's Paris office provided continuous support and counsel throughout this project. We extend our sincere gratitude to Michel Garcin, President; and Nicole Choffel, Director. We also wish to express our appreciation for the help provided by the French-American Foundation International Board.

This Report, including its recommendations, reflects the views of the French-American Foundation and not necessarily those of members of the Foundation's delegation.

PREFACE

The Art of the Possible

Why send 15 American experts on early childhood education to France to see what the United States might learn from the French system of preschool education? Why do we need to go *there*, some might ask, when much of the best research on early childhood development and education in the world rests on this side of the ocean.

We already know, for example, from a 1998 Rand Corporation study that children who attend early childhood programs are more likely to excel in school, earn more during their lifetimes and lead healthier lives. And we know from the same Rand study that spending on preschool saves significant money in the long run, by diverting children who participated from welfare, crime, special education and health services.

As our own social science argues for enhancing early childhood programs, a dramatic exodus of women from their homes has also intensified the need. An overhaul of the welfare system has pushed still more women out of the house and into the workplace. With mothers' entry into the nine-to-five world comes a corollary shift among their children: by 1997, some two-thirds of this country's three- to five-year-olds were being cared for, and educated, outside of their homes.

The U.S. is now catching up with these social trends, and a quiet revolution in preschool programming is underway, as some states move toward universal pre-kindergarten systems. These programs stress high standards and good pay for teachers, and they incorporate both the education of children, and their care, under one roof.

France offers a clear view of what is possible.

It is called the "école maternelle," and the name of this school system, available free to all young children in France, suggests its underlying philosophy – a place where children are both schooled and nurtured. While the *école maternelle* is not a perfect system, it is among the most ambitious and comprehensive preschools in the world.

This Report will describe the characteristics of the *écoles maternelles* – from their universal availability and highly trained teachers to their consistent quality, impressive facilities, deep public support and apparently happy and learning students.

It also acknowledges some underlying differences between the two countries. Certainly Americans love their children no less than the French, but France already invests generously in its children across a spectrum of cash benefits, tax credits and health services, which the French-American Foundation has detailed in its previous reports *A Welcome for Every Child I: How France Achieves Quality in Child Care* and *A Welcome for Every Child II: How France Protects Maternal and Child Health*. France exceeds the U.S. in measures

"By 1997, some two-thirds of this country's three- to five-year-olds were being cared for, and educated, outside of their homes"

"The U.S. continues to confront a 'quiet crisis' in the lives of its youngest children... Roughly 20 percent of U.S. children live in poverty, compared with nearly 7 percent in France."

of child well-being such as preterm births, low birthweight, infant death, prenatal care and rates of immunization.

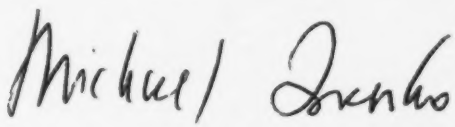
Using some of these indicators, the U.S. continues to confront a "quiet crisis" in the lives of its youngest children, according to *Starting Points*, a landmark 1994 Carnegie Corporation report. Roughly 20 percent of U.S. children live in poverty, compared with nearly 7 percent in France, according to the 1999 Luxembourg Income Studies.

Given these and other French advantages detailed throughout this Report, what can we glean from the French educational system? Our delegation of 15 spent time inside French classrooms in rich and poor neighborhoods, where they observed inspired preschool teaching and children eager to learn.

Based on these observations, and the wealth of collective knowledge our delegates bring regarding the American system, this Report suggests some new directions for the U.S. These suggestions are meant to open a national debate about what is achievable in both caring for and educating our young.

Over the next two years, the French-American Foundation will organize state working forums to stimulate this debate. Delegates and staff will share their knowledge and findings with a larger audience. The forums are intended to bring together educators, child development specialists, members of the early childhood education and care community, state and local officials and legislators, the media and business leaders.

"We don't have to focus on replication," said one delegate, Karen Hill-Scott, a Los Angeles-based consultant on early childhood development. "We can look at the French system in a different way, which is as an example of the art of the possible."



Michael Iovenko, President
French-American Foundation

PILLARS OF EARLY EDUCATION

France provides all young children, rich and poor, with a comprehensive system of education and care:

- ***Pre-elementary schools for all children ages three to five, called*** **écoles maternelles.**
- ***Infant-toddler centers, called*** **crèches,** ***for children two months to three-years-old.***
- ***A public-private system of preventive health care for mother and child known as*** **Protection Maternelle et Infantile (PMI).**

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READY TO LEARN: A Call For Preschool For Every Child

The fragmented American approach to early childhood education and care has been judged second-rate by U.S. researchers. The hallmark of this patchwork system is variability – in structure and quality. Families may send their children to preschool, nursery school, child or day care. They pay most of the costs of care. Families that would benefit most from good programs can't afford to enroll their children.

But a new profile of early education and care is emerging and public support for change is increasing. More than 50 bills were introduced in the last Congress to increase support for publicly-financed early education and care programs. At least 40 states have begun to combine early childhood education and child care funds to create programs for children under age five.

As this trend takes shape, the French-American Foundation sought to provide some of its architects – American researchers, economists, business people, educators and journalists – with an understanding of France's answer to early childhood education and care, the *écoles maternelles*.

To the French, this preschool attended by 2.5 million children is the crown jewel of the country's educational system. It is a widely shared rite of passage of French childhood. "Everything, in sum, starts here," wrote the Minister of Education recently in a circular to the *écoles maternelles*.

Fifteen American delegates, who visited 11 *écoles maternelles* in rich, poor and middle-class neighborhoods in and around Paris, saw

"A new profile of early education and care is emerging...More than 50 bills were introduced in the last Congress to increase support for publicly-financed early education and care programs."

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"Nearly 100 percent of three- to five-year-old children attend the école maternelle, *which combines education and care under one roof for at least eight hours each day."*

many of the principles now being explored to guide new U.S. programs played out in real life in a 100-year-old French preschool system.

Though attendance is voluntary, nearly 100 percent of three- to five-year-old children attend the *école maternelle*, which combines education and care under one roof for at least eight hours each day. About 35% percent of two-year-olds also attend. The school is free to all French families, who support it enthusiastically. Child care offered before and after school and during the lunch hour helps working families. Highly-trained teachers form the backbone of quality. The schools themselves are physically impressive, in large, bright spaces filled with materials for children, whether in rich or poor neighborhoods.

The French preschools follow a national curriculum, tailoring program content to children in three stages of development. This curriculum emphasizes socialization, as well as math and language skills. Everyday experiences, such as counting the days on a calendar, become the stepping stones to more formal learning.

The schools are structured into a coherent system of financing, administration and accountability. The national government pays for and trains teachers; local entities pay for school buildings and infrastructure. Inspectors oversee teachers, and the public holds elected officials accountable for the entire system, because there is such strong belief in its benefit. While Americans debate whether family or school is the most suitable place for a very young child, the French come squarely down on the side of the school.

In the U.S., the cost of education and nurturing a preschooler varies enormously. Those costs range from about $1,200 a year per child in the state of Arkansas, up to $8,300 in New Jersey, according to a survey of state-funded preschool initiatives by a group of Yale researchers published in 1999 in the *American Psychologist*.

In France, the annual costs of the *école maternelle* and before-and-after school programs for a child in Paris are the equivalent of about $5,500, according to French government figures. The national and local government pays nearly all costs.

The American delegates were impressed by the French system's universal availability, consistent quality, rigorous teacher training and streamlined system of funding and governance. They also noted characteristics that might limit its application in the U.S.

Municipalities hire special staff to provide care during lunch and nap time in preschools.

Can or should the U.S. adopt the *école maternelle*? Perhaps not in its entirety. Should the U.S. work toward a system that offers free, universal pre-kindergarten to all children, rich and poor? The French-American Foundation recommends yes, by tailoring such a system to the more decentralized American educational landscape.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION INCLUDE:

- Promote preschool for every child
- Clarify national, state and local roles and responsibilities
- Train and adequately pay teachers of young children
- Develop core principles for early childhood programs
- Respond to the needs of children and families.

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Recommendations For Action

Some of the best practices of the French preschool system can be adapted to our own. Five key areas emerge as critical to helping all American children have opportunities for high-quality learning experiences during the third, fourth and fifth years of life. The Foundation recommends:

PROMOTE PRESCHOOL FOR EVERY CHILD

Every child deserves, and should have the opportunity to attend a publicly supported preschool program, starting at age three, and thereby to develop his or her full potential to succeed in elementary school and beyond. Each must be cognitively, socially and emotionally prepared. His or her access to a quality preschool should be ensured, as the choice to attend is left to the family. The geographic and economic circumstances of families should not be barriers to preschool education.

- Have the Federal government ensure that each state has adequate resources so that every child has universal access — on a voluntary basis — to quality preschool.

- Aim more efforts by government and private sources at poor and working poor children, a majority of whom do not currently attend any preschool program.

CLARIFY NATIONAL, STATE AND LOCAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In France, a system of national governance determines content as well as the funding and training of teachers. In the U.S., funding, governance and accountability should be coordinated with existing U.S. structures, which assign the education and care of children to the state and local levels.

- **National role:** Assure that all children have access to preschool education with a focus on improving the quality of programs, possibly through model voluntary standards.

- **State role:** Coordinate funds serving preschool children for universal pre-kindergarten programs.

- **Local role:** Adapt the principles of quality programs to local conditions and promote innovation. Local coalitions, including leading figures in health, education, social services, faith and business communities, should oversee the development of the best programs.

TRAIN AND ADEQUATELY PAY TEACHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

The best predictor of quality early education and care and sound outcomes for children is a competent, prepared teacher. There is a critical shortage of such teachers for preschool programs and of trained directors and managers.

- Train current preschool teachers, so they can work toward certification, as part of the pre-K-12 certification process.
- Recruit quality professionals to work with young children.
- Move toward preschool teacher compensation at the same level as that of elementary school teachers, while simultaneously equating the levels of training.

DEVELOP CORE PRINCIPLES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

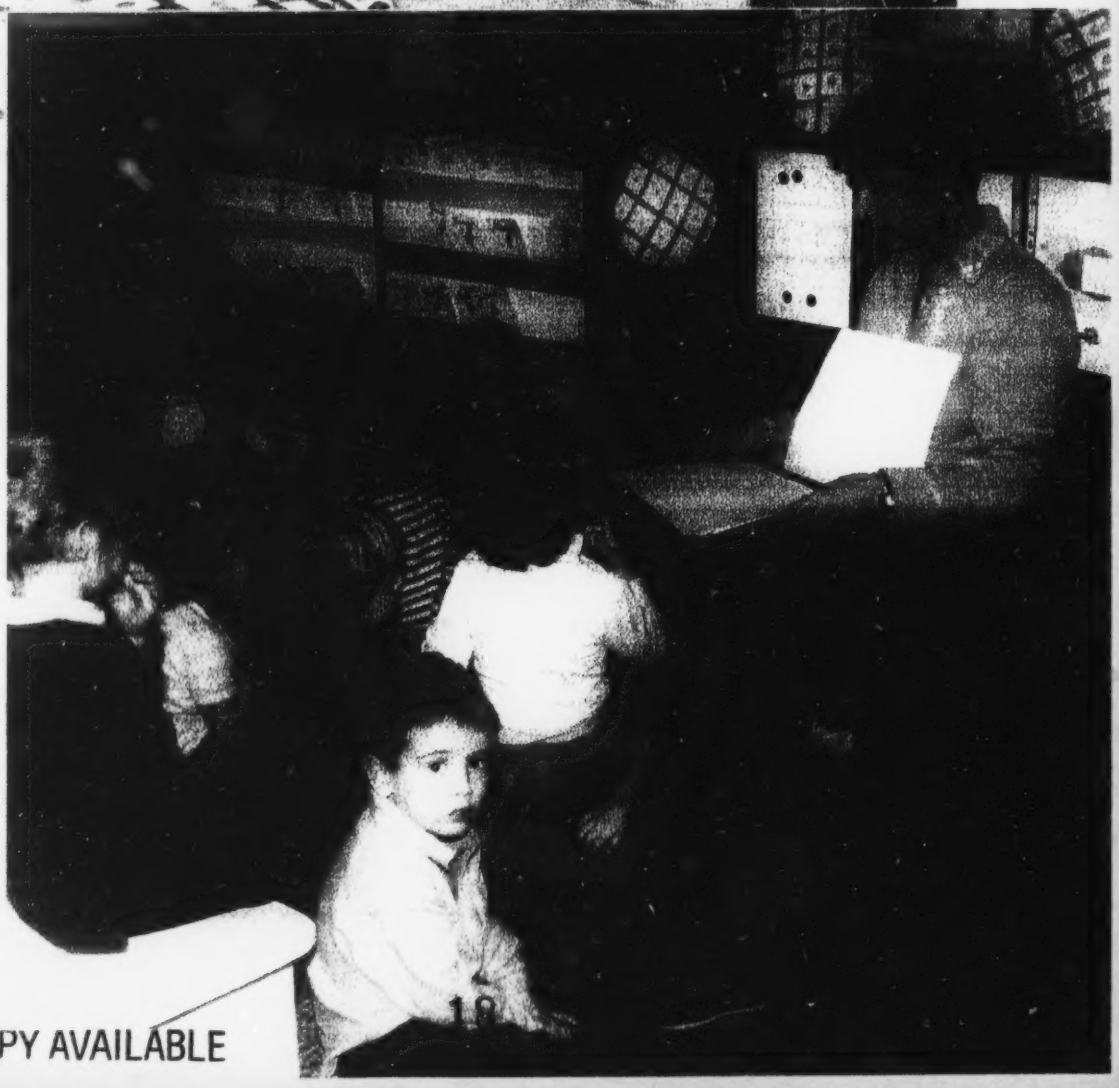
The basic developmental requirements of children are consistent across communities, but the quality of their early education and care is not. The elements of good programs should be identified and established as achievable goals, so that the quality of early education and care for all children is raised and equalized.

- Eliminate the distinction between the caregiving to children and their educational needs. Any good program should blend both, to prepare children for life and learning.
- Develop national operating principles that can be adapted locally, to stress health and safety, curriculum and training, accreditation and credentialing, as well as the planning and zoning of facilities for young children.
- Ensure that children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development is the foundation for designing early learning experiences.
- Make access and referral to health and mental health services fully available to children.

RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The early needs of children cannot be met without considering their parents. A mutually beneficial strategy should be adopted, one that recognizes the value of parents in reinforcing children's educational setting, and the necessity of that setting to support the needs of parents.

- Promote coordination of Head Start, child care, and pre-kindergarten programs to create full-day, year-round learning programs for all children.
- Make full-day kindergarten available to all families.
- Involve parents in pre-kindergarten programs.
- Consider the needs of working families.



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CHAPTER ONE

Through American Eyes: The *Ecole Maternelle*

"I do believe that America should have this preschool system as a goal. Our visit was an absolutely rousing endorsement of how wonderful and important it is for all kids."

Delaine Eastin, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, who is pressing for universal preschool in that state over the coming decade.

In a spacious old school building in a middle-class neighborhood of Paris, a group of 25 three- and four-year-olds gather around a preschool teacher to hear the day's lesson, about a grand house for kings. Pictures of more ordinary dwellings cover the walls – apartments, cottages, suburban homes.

As the teacher describes each part of this French royal residence from a large travel book, she pauses to ask a child to pick the part from felt pictures and place it on a felt board nearby. Soon, a whole palace, with formal gardens and a Hall of Mirrors, has been re-created in felt by the children. Within minutes, they move to easels all over the room, to paint their favorite parts of the Palace of Versailles.

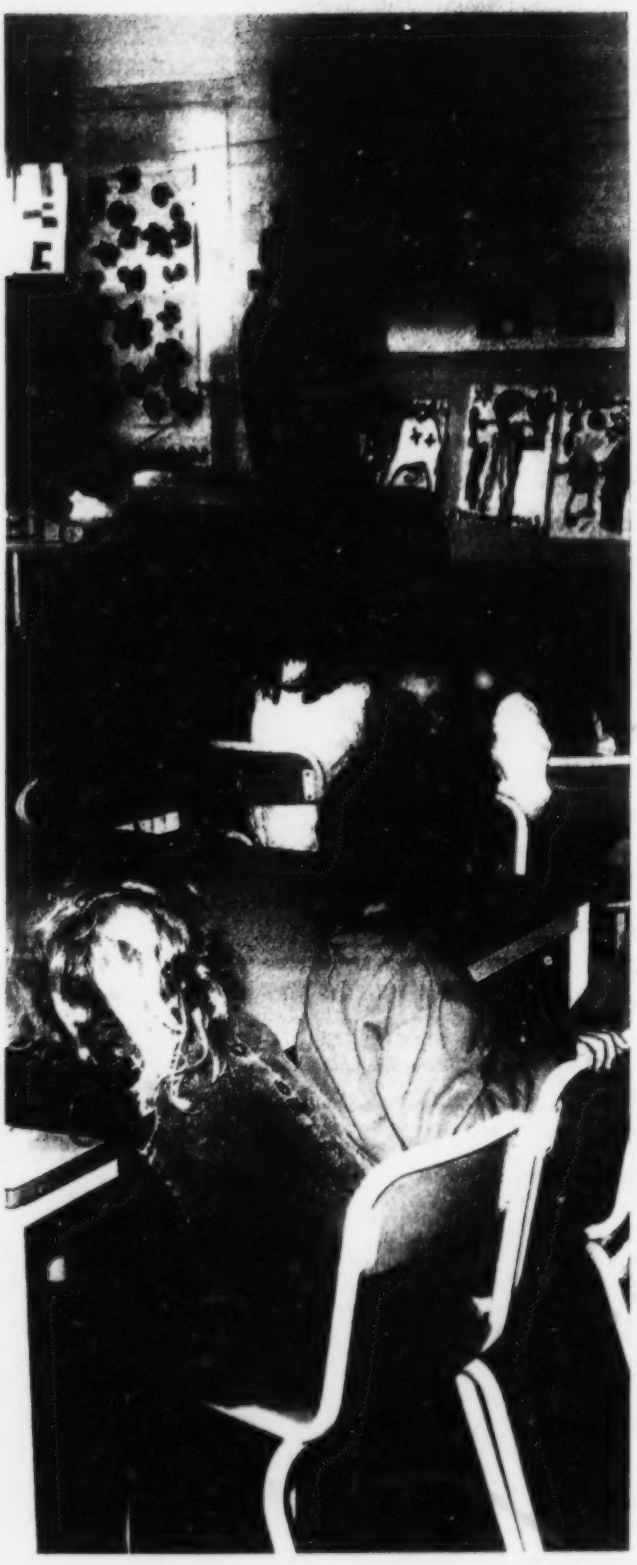
The next day, in a suburban school dozens of miles away, a different lesson using similar methods is underway, in which children connect what they hear with what they see. To a visiting American observer, one of a delegation of the French-American Foundation come to view these schools and methods, it is a demonstration of consistent excellence, visible from school to school across France.

In old buildings attached to elementary schools, or in bright, modern, free-standing structures in the middle of apartment complexes, some 19,000 *écoles maternelles* dot France's landscape. Every school day, for about six hours, more than two million French two- to five-year-old children attend these early schools. Established in 1881, the *école maternelle* now draws virtually all three- to five-year-old children in France. Some 35 percent of two-year-olds attend. It is called the crown jewel of the French educational system.

The French-American Foundation delegation of 15 early childhood experts visiting 11 preschools in Paris and surrounding suburbs witnessed dozens of scenes of inspired teaching. The delegates also saw

All teachers are well-trained and able to manage large groups effectively while ensuring that each child receives individual attention.

AN OLD SCHOOL FOR THE YOUNG



The prelude to today's écoles maternelles *were the* salles d'asile, *or day nurseries, founded in Paris in 1826 as charitable institutions run by women who cared for and educated boys and girls up to age six. Most of the* salles d'asile *were run by nuns.*

By the 1840s, a teaching manual on managing the day nurseries appeared, then a training college for heads of nursery schools. By 1881, a law outlined a system of free education for France's two- through seven-year-olds. In 1882, the role and name of the école maternelle *was established.*

The founding influence of the école maternelle *was Pauline Kergomard, who ran France's* salles d'asile *in the late 1800s and promoted spontaneity and free expression among children. She asserted that children needed to play, to be active and to be accepted as people with inner lives and spiritual needs. She also stressed music and singing.*

Kergomard also had a strong sense of the social role of the école maternelle, *its need to work with families and be active in child health. She believed in the* école *as the "cradle of democracy," where, by fostering an atmosphere of tenderness and affection, the foundation for peace would be laid.*

Kergomard also obtained training for early childhood educators equivalent to that of primary school teachers.

Because of its success with children and families, the école maternelle *expanded significantly after the Second World War. Between 1963 and 1976, the proportion of all children attending rose from 43 percent to 77 percent. Today, nearly 100 percent of France's three- through five-year-olds attend the* école maternelle.

Source: Tricia David, ed., *Educational Provision For Our Youngest Children: European Perspectives*. London: Paul Chapman, 1993.

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classes that would be considered too large in the U.S., and some examples of teaching that sometimes did not appear to encourage self-expression. But overall, the delegates were struck by a well-functioning system built on principles that some states and U.S. policy makers are just beginning to adopt: a universal pre-kindergarten system, free to all families rich and poor, employing highly skilled teachers in school settings.

"I do believe that America should have this preschool system as a goal," said Delaine Eastin, the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and a member of the FAF delegation. "That's what I'm pushing for in California, and I didn't see anything in France that would disabuse me of that. Our visit was an absolutely rousing endorsement of how wonderful and important it is for all kids."

"Delegates saw libraries better stocked than those in many U.S. elementary schools; a painting class that produced beautiful art; and three-year-olds using cloth napkins, knives, forks and real glasses of milk to polish off their bread and chicken."

Those sentiments were echoed by other delegates, who contrasted the French system with a more fragmented one in the U.S., poorly funded by the government, left mostly to families to finance, uneven in quality, and lacking in skilled teachers and adequate pay.

In France, society's emphasis on young children is evident at the *école maternelle*. Each school is its own self-contained palace for pre-schoolers – rich in games, materials and play spaces. When a school is built, an architectural competition is held to pick the best design. Some feature movie rooms. All have cafeterias that look to visitors like miniature French restaurants, with glassware, tableware and decorative lighting. There are separate sleeping areas for naps. Each school also makes room for its staff – with a director's office and a staff lounge.

Delegates saw libraries better stocked than those in many U.S. elementary schools, with children sprawled across carpeted stairs looking at books; a painting class that produced beautiful art; and truly amazing diners – three-year-olds serving one another radicchio salad, then using cloth napkins, knives, forks and real glasses of milk to polish off their bread and chicken.

In the classroom, children were encouraged to draw, count, measure, describe their environment and locate themselves in time and space. Teachers, using their own unique skills, also encouraged children to express feelings through artistic and creative play. Although the national framework includes precise learning objectives for young children, it is not conceived as a rigid program to follow.

The delegates were impressed by the high expectations imparted to

the children, and by the children's discipline, risk-taking and independence. A class of three-year-olds was encouraged to negotiate an obstacle course, crossing a rope bridge, crawling through a set of rings. Students were able to sit for long periods and listen. During one lesson, two children rose and left the room. One delegate followed. Were they leaving the building? Why wasn't a teacher or aide pursuing them? They were going to the restroom, without adults and without asking.

"One government study shows that the more years a French child spends in the école maternelle, *the better his or her first-grade performance is likely to be, especially if that child is poor."*

"There was real attention to children's sense of themselves and where they fit in relation to others," said Pennsylvania State Senator Allyson Schwartz, who chairs her state's Senate Education Committee and has sponsored several early childhood education bills. "We've all seen children take pictures of themselves and write about themselves, but this was taken to another level. These were very young children doing portrait painting with their friends and with groups of other children. It was very striking."

This level of quality may be readily apparent to American visitors, but it is also documented by French research. One government study shows that the more years a French child spends in the *école maternelle*, the better his or her first-grade performance is likely to be, especially if that child is poor. When poor children attend no *école maternelle*, more than half fail the first grade. But four years of preschool cuts that rate in half.

To an American eye, some strengths of the *école maternelle* also translated into limitations. While the children's socialization and group behavior were impressive, the classes were too large for some American tastes – about 25 for a teacher and half-time aide. But that represents a big drop from a high of about 40 students per class in 1972.

Many French experts believe large groups help children develop social skills and self-assurance. Although many French teachers also favor smaller classes and lower teacher-child ratios, even their ideal number of children per group would be larger than some U.S. experts would approve.

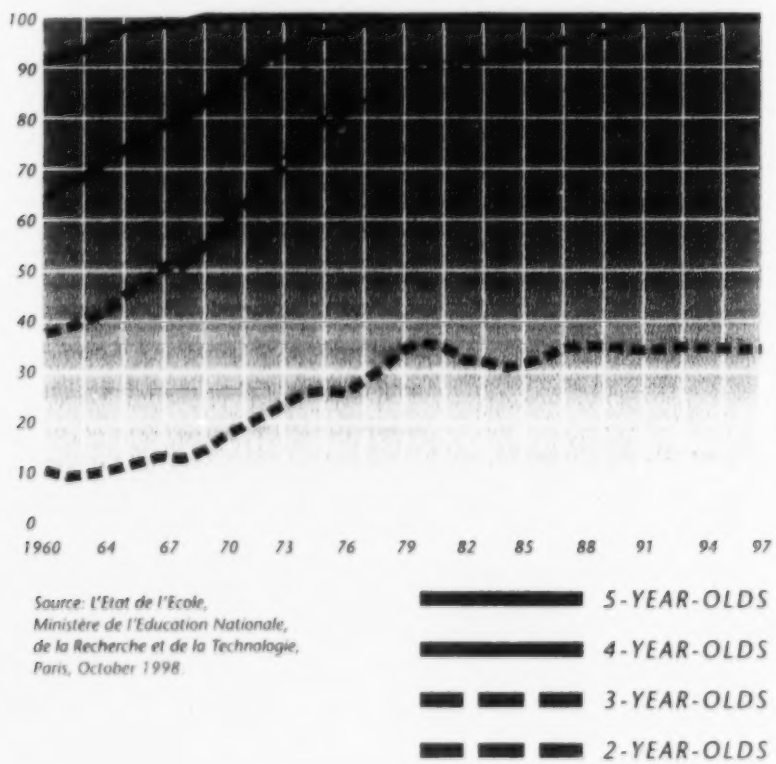
Delegates also noted that while schools and teachers are strongly supported by the public – indeed, the French believe deeply that the early years in the *école maternelle* bring long-term academic and social dividends – parents seem less involved at school, in part because they place unfailing trust in teachers.

While there was mutual respect between teacher and child, some delegates saw a lack of spontaneity on the part of children. "I saw children learning, engaged and happy, but I did not see much spontaneity," said Sarah Greene, Chief Executive Officer of the National Head Start Association and one of the American delegates. "I didn't see it encouraged or responded to when a child tried it."

Children with special needs did not seem to receive much help in classrooms though every school has a special education teacher who works with children individually. Many of the older schools did not appear to be accessible to wheelchair-bound children, delegates said.

Some American delegates also noted a lack of multi-culturalism in the curriculum. Some 10 percent of children in French schools are foreign nationals and many French-born children have foreign parents. The *école maternelle* plays an important role promoting social integration by emphasizing immersion in French language and culture at an

FIG. 1
PERCENTAGE OF 2- TO 5-YEAR-OLDS ENROLLED IN ECOLE MATERNELLE *(1960-1997)*



Source: L'Etat de l'Ecole, Ministère de l'Education Nationale, de la Recherche et de la Technologie, Paris, October 1998.

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CELINE GOES TO SCHOOL

Céline Lemaire is a cheerful, pretty, chatty child who doesn't like to sit still for long. There was no question, when Céline turned three, that she would start preschool near her family's three-bedroom house in Villiers-sur-Orge, an upper-middle-class suburb southwest of Paris.

"It was just in the normal course of things to put my children in the school," said Céline's mother, Isabelle Lemaire, a 38-year-old computer programmer who works part-time now that she has three young children. Her husband is a plumber and electrician. "I couldn't imagine keeping them home until they were five or six. It's great for them to learn to live together with other children when they're younger."

"It was just in the normal course of things to put my children in the school...It's great for them to learn to live together with other children when they're younger."

For Céline, a school day begins shortly after 8 a.m., when a neighbor or babysitter walks her the short distance to the école maternelle, two old buildings with two new playgrounds outside, one for the youngest children, the other for the older ones.

Céline has attended the école for two years now, engaging in a range of activities that she clearly loves. Last year, in the "moyenne" or middle year of the 3-year preschool sequence, Céline's class project was to make a book with a story about rabbits and carrots. It was illustrated by the children, parents contributed supplies, and each family received a copy. Céline and her older sister's schooling have otherwise been free, paid for by the French government and local communities.

A typical day for Céline might have begun with studying the calendar and discussing the weather outside, then doing writing and reading exercises through play and song (see box in chapter 2). There is plenty of time for recess outside on the playground, as well as for snacks, music and artistic expression.

In her first year with the youngest children, Céline was taught by the head mistress of the school, a gentle woman in her mid-50s who has a gift with children. Céline enjoyed an affectionate relationship with her teacher, giving her kisses on the cheek each morning when she arrived at school.

Teachers, Céline's mother believes, are well qualified to make decisions about the children. "If teachers discipline your child, they're doing it for the good of the class or for the good of the child," said Isabelle Lemaire. "I don't like parents who are forever going to school to complain. The teachers are professionals; they know the classroom."

Céline's mother is very enthusiastic about her children's experience at

the école, from the quality of the teachers her children have had to the kinds of skills they have learned that they never would have acquired at home. As an example, she cites the routine the very youngest children learn at nap time, in which children undress themselves, fold their clothing, put it in a basket, carry it to the dormitory, find their teddy bears, then go to sleep or lie quietly.

"When they wake up, they must get up quietly, dress themselves quietly, leave the room quietly, go to the toilet themselves and wash their hands and faces," said Isabelle Lemaire. "It's a whole discipline that is quite amazing, these little two-and-a-half-year-olds with baskets under their arms."

Isabelle Lemaire has only one complaint about her children's experience at the école, and that concerns class size. "It's too big," she said, adding that Céline first was in a class of 28, and this year will be in one with 30 children.

But she adds that Céline will do well because she has an outgoing disposition, and the skillful teachers give each child a lot of attention. Such concerns, in fact, are lost on Céline, who loves her school and is quick to name her favorite activity. "I like playing with the dolls best," she said.

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early age. All *écoles maternelles* are required by law to welcome children's home culture and language, and the teaching staff may attend language courses.

Delegates also learned that even in France, where there is almost unanimous support for preschools, there is controversy over including two-year-olds. Some 35 percent of two-year-olds now attend. Research shows that French preschool especially gives disadvantaged two-year-olds an advantage, and national policy has favored enrolling them – in smaller classes and with appropriate teachers and curriculum.

Overall, delegates were struck by the absolute and unquestioned acceptance of the *école maternelle* by the French – as something that is part of the inviolable "creed and culture."

"We kept asking people how they came to this acceptance of preschool as a universal norm," said State Senator Schwartz. "It was so accepted, they couldn't remember. To them, it was such an odd idea – that we would question the need for families to have quality care and preschool for children. They thought we were the odd ones."

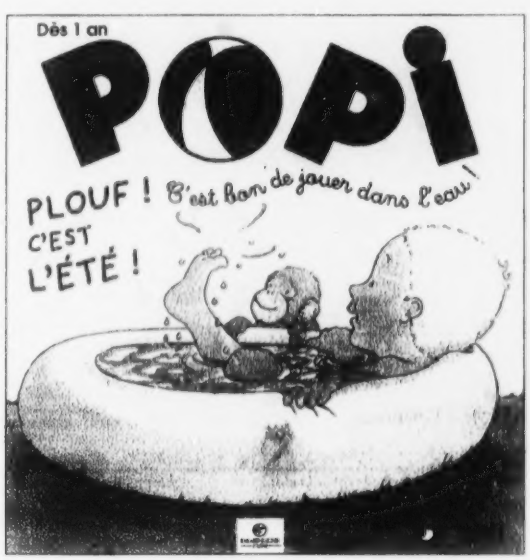
AT A GLANCE:

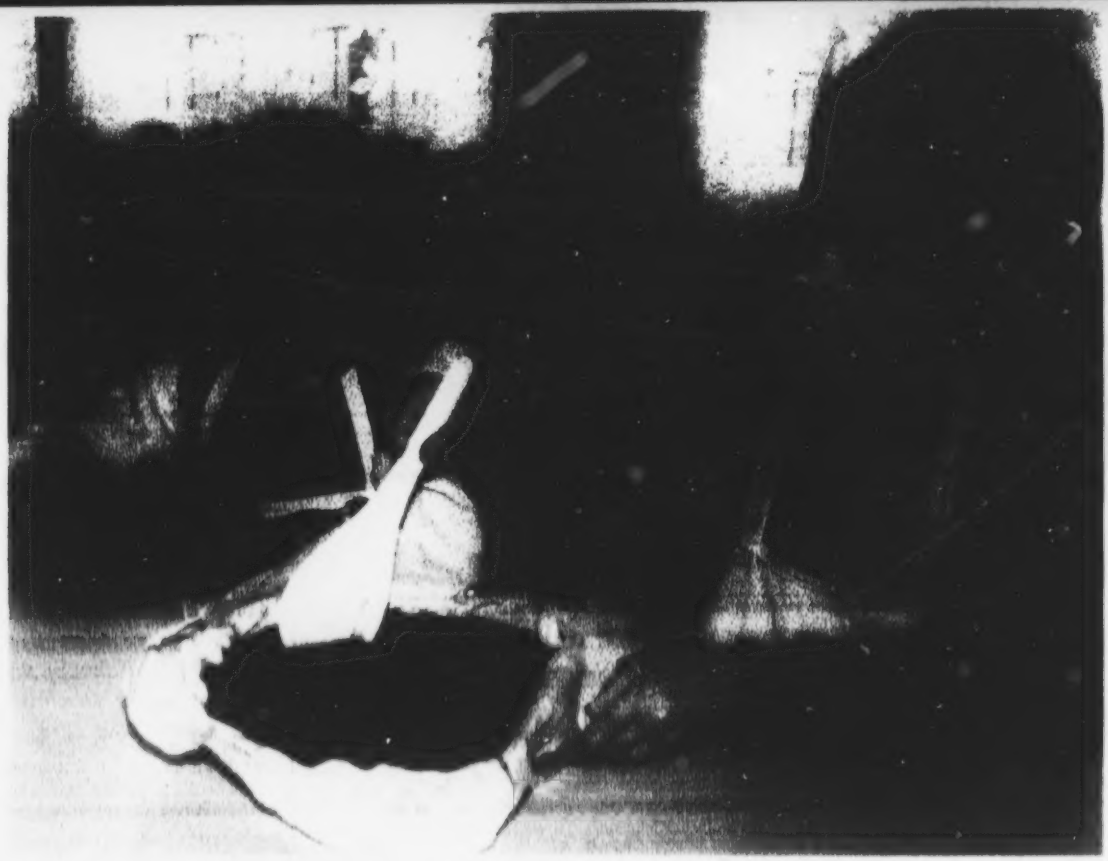
ECOLE MATERNELLE—

- *Universal preschool free to all children*
- *Highly trained teachers*
- *Consistent quality throughout schools*
- *Strong public support*
- *Impressive facilities*
- *Happy, learning children*

SOME LIMITATIONS:

- *Teacher-directed teaching model*
- *Classes large—25 on average*
- *Children with special needs not necessarily accommodated*
- *Immersion in French culture stressed over multi-culturalism*
- *Little parental involvement*





CHAPTER TWO

By Design: French Preschools Inform Curriculum

In one lesson, young children are asked whether dragons exist. In another, they bake a pie. On a playground, they learn to take turns on a swing. Inside, they help set the table for snacks. In a U.S. preschool, these activities might occur but not because of a widely accepted curriculum.

In France, the dragon is a lesson in developing vocabulary and creative thinking, the pie-baking a science class for three-year-olds. Taking turns on swings and setting the table are meant to lay the foundation for responsible citizenship. All emanate from a grand plan, a national framework of specific common goals and guidelines. Upon it rests the day-to-day teaching and care of France's youngest students.

In the U.S., goals and guidelines vary enormously from state to

"In their pedagogy, the French have goals and outcomes that are expected. And on the front end is this unbelievable concept – that they welcome every child into French society. It's completely oriented toward a social purpose, which is harmony."

Karen Hill-Scott, a Los Angeles-based consultant in child development.

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WORDS TO TEACH BY

The école maternelle *is guided by a curriculum, "The Program For Primary Schools In France," established by the Ministry of Education. The book devotes 20 pages to guidelines for the* école maternelle, *covering everything from language and writing to social and physical development. Here is an excerpt from a section, "Discovering The World":*

DISCOVERING THE WORLD OF OBJECTS

- *Using various technical objects in functional situations (life at school, nutrition and cooking, internal and/or external communication, games, building workshops, etc.)*
- *Playing construction games*
- *Assembling and taking objects apart*
- *Building objects: project involving the creation of an object, choice of tools and materials for the task, specific technical acts (folding, cutting, gluing, etc.)*

DISCOVERING THE WORLD OF MATTER

- *Discovering some of the properties of natural materials (wood, earth, stone, etc.)*
- *Introducing the notion of air (wind, etc.)*
- *Introducing the notion of water (liquid, rain, snow, ice)*
- *Observing the effects of light (shadows)*

DISCOVERING LIVE MATTER

- *Discovering one's own body (both the entire body and body parts)*
- *Observing some characteristics of life (birth, growth, development, aging and death)*
- *Introducing some of the important functions of life (growth, locomotion, nutrition, reproduction) by observing life in various environments (in the classroom or during outings close-by: visits to a pond, bush, animal farm, etc.) or through audiovisual material*

DISCOVERING NATURAL AND HUMAN-MADE SPACES: SENSITIZATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- *Visually appraising shapes and dimensions*
- *Discovering, observing and describing nature (plants, animals), the immediate environment and less familiar spaces*
- *Learning practical activities such as gardening or caring for animals*
- *Identifying varied environments (countryside, sea, mountain, plain, forest, stream, river, waterway, city, etc.)*
- *Observing human constructions (houses, businesses, roads, etc.)*
- *Consciousness-raising about the importance of waste materials, etc.*
- *Learning to identify sources of pollution (noise, odors, etc.)*

state. One may have hundreds of child care centers accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, which requires a curriculum that encourages a child's intellectual and emotional development. Another state might have no more than a dozen such accredited centers. One state legislates low teacher-child ratios, strong health and safety standards, and good training and pay for teachers. Another might require little more than wood chips under playground equipment.

"You're going to need to learn how to read... to write, and how to comport yourself in a dining room with other people. And then they create an environment where a child can practice this."

New state initiatives are requiring greater attention to the content of early childhood programs, and a few wars have even broken out over what they should contain. Meanwhile, Head Start has its own performance standards, implemented by local programs.

In France, standards focus on curriculum, or the content of daily lessons, which inform all activities in every classroom, as executed creatively and individually by skillful teachers. The overall mission? To bring about the best in every child.

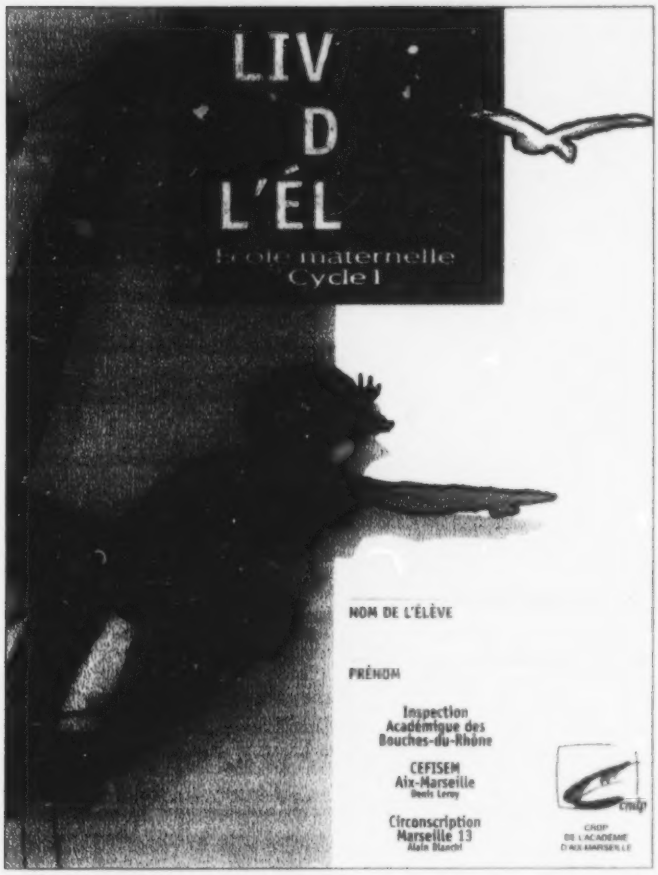
"In their pedagogy, the French have goals and outcomes that are expected," said Karen Hill-Scott, a Los Angeles-based consultant in child development. "And on the front end is this unbelievable concept – that they welcome every child into French society. That's what French preschool is all for. It was amazing to hear the Minister of Education – someone that high up in the government – say that. It's not an intervention; it's not based on pathology, on parents doing something wrong. It's completely oriented toward a social purpose, which is harmony."

From there, Hill-Scott added, the goals are derived. "They say, 'You're going to need to learn how to read; you're going to need to learn how to write, and how to comport yourself in a dining room with other people.' And then they create an environment where a child can practice this."

The organization of these goals and guidelines is built around three stages, or "cycles of learning" which go beyond the *école maternelle* to include children up to the age of 11. These cycles ensure that what occurs in classrooms is appropriate to a child's stage of development. The first one, for example, is aimed at children in the first two years of preschool. Children learn how to speak and construct language, and they become familiar with the world of writing.

The second cycle, for children in the last year of preschool and the

first two years of elementary school, is meant to establish a bridge from preschool to elementary school. Children focus on literacy and math, and teachers from preschool are likely to interact with those at the elementary level to help make this transition. In the third cycle, covering the last years of elementary school, literacy and math are further emphasized.



A report card keeps parents informed about the development of their children.

The organization around cycles of learning enables the teaching team to adapt their methods to the rhythm and progress of each child, note their different rates of learning, and detect any learning difficulties or special needs. Teachers and the pedagogical team monitor and assess children's progress regularly throughout the year, and over the years.

At preschool, activities are designed to achieve specific goals as delineated by a Ministry of Education curriculum guide, 20 pages of which are devoted to the *école maternelle*. In the guide, the *école* is described as "a school with structured open-mindedness" that is "focused on the child." Goals or guidelines encompass such areas as helping children work together, developing their ability to speak, introducing them to language, helping them interact physically with the world, and expressing themselves creatively.

To American observers from the French-American Foundation delegation, it appeared that teachers do not teach "subjects" such as math, reading or science. Rather, they often draw from the experiences of everyday life to prepare children for later learning – counting out the days on a calendar as each new day arrives, or counting out cookies at snack time. More formal teaching might be getting to know the look of a sentence – so that children can identify a period, a space or a capital letter.

And children are encouraged to express feelings and imagination through artistic activities, such as drawing and painting. All aspects of development are recorded in a kind of report card, the "livret scolaire,"

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to track development and inform parents, though no specific skills are required for a child to move on to elementary school.

Like other aspects of the French preschool, some parts of the curriculum struck American delegates as outmoded when held up to current American thinking, though not necessarily current American practice.

"I did see evidence of confining a child's expression rather than channeling a child's expression," said Hill-Scott. In a lesson on royalty or costumes, children were given pictures of a king's face with a crown and asked to color it. "That's considered bad form in America today. You would want the kids to have self-control, to learn how to do the cutting. It's better for them to approximate what something looks like than to have it handed to them."

But it was clear, too, that while there were clear national objectives, they were not conceived as rigid directives, but rather as guidelines for teachers to adapt classroom practices to children's needs.

"I don't think there is anything inherently stifling about the national curriculum," said Augusta Souza Kappner, President of Bank Street College of Education in New York City. "I think it does mean you have to have very, very skilled teachers to find ways to take a more standardized curriculum and relate it to the needs of individual children. We saw a lot of evidence of that, but the two must go hand-in-hand."

AT A GLANCE:

FRANCE

- *Emphasis on welcoming every child to society*
- *Learning built on everyday experience*
- *Three stages, or "cycles of learning," help tailor curriculum to child*
- *National curriculum sets goals and guidelines*

U.S.

- *Curriculum varies from state to state and school to school*
- *National professional organization accredits early childhood programs on a voluntary basis even when public funds are involved*
- *National Head Start performance standards implemented locally*
- *Emphasis on public support for specific categories of children deemed "in need" of support*

A TYPICAL DAY IN AN ECOLE MATERNELLE

8:20 a.m.	*Teachers and children greet one another with a kiss or hello. While children play, parents talk casually with the teacher.*
8:40 a.m.	*Lunch roll call. Children tell the teacher whether they will be eating lunch at the school or staying for the after-school program.*
8:45 a.m.	*The class lesson begins when the children write down the date, count the number of days in the month, name the days of the week and describe the day's weather. After that, they sing, recite poems, and mime short stories with their fingers.*
9:15 a.m.	*The children illustrate a song or story, write down a word or look for a word in a story. They might write down their first name.*
9:30 a.m.	*Children go to the dance studio where they do rhythm exercises, gymnastics or learn a dance.*
10:00 a.m.	*Morning snack in the classroom. Every day a different group of children serves the class.*
10:25 a.m.	*Children play individual math games, such as tracing a path through a maze.*
10:40 a.m.	*Clean-up time, followed by morning recess in the school-yard.*
11:15 a.m.	*Back in the classroom, 25 percent of the children prepare to go home for lunch, while 75 percent eat at the school cafeteria.*
1:30 p.m.	*Children return to the school for Quiet Time, during which they listen to music or stories, such as "Peter and the Wolf," the musical story by Prokofiev.*

Children are encouraged to express feelings and imagination through artistic activities.

1:45 p.m. — *One group of children works with the school director in a "Cooking and Science" workshop, where they bake a pie. A larger group is separated into three smaller groups for art workshops of painting, clay and pasting. After that, they play in "play zones," read in the class library, or play on computers.*

2:45 p.m. — *Thirty-minute recess outside.*

3:15 p.m. — *Children split into small groups for educational games such as puzzles, cutting out exercises and creating collages.*

3:45 p.m. — *Free play.*

4:15 p.m. — *Roll call is taken, the classroom is tidied up and a story is read to all.*

4:30 p.m. — *School is over. 50 percent of the children go home, 25 percent go to the home of a caregiver, and 25 percent remain at the school in an after-school program.*

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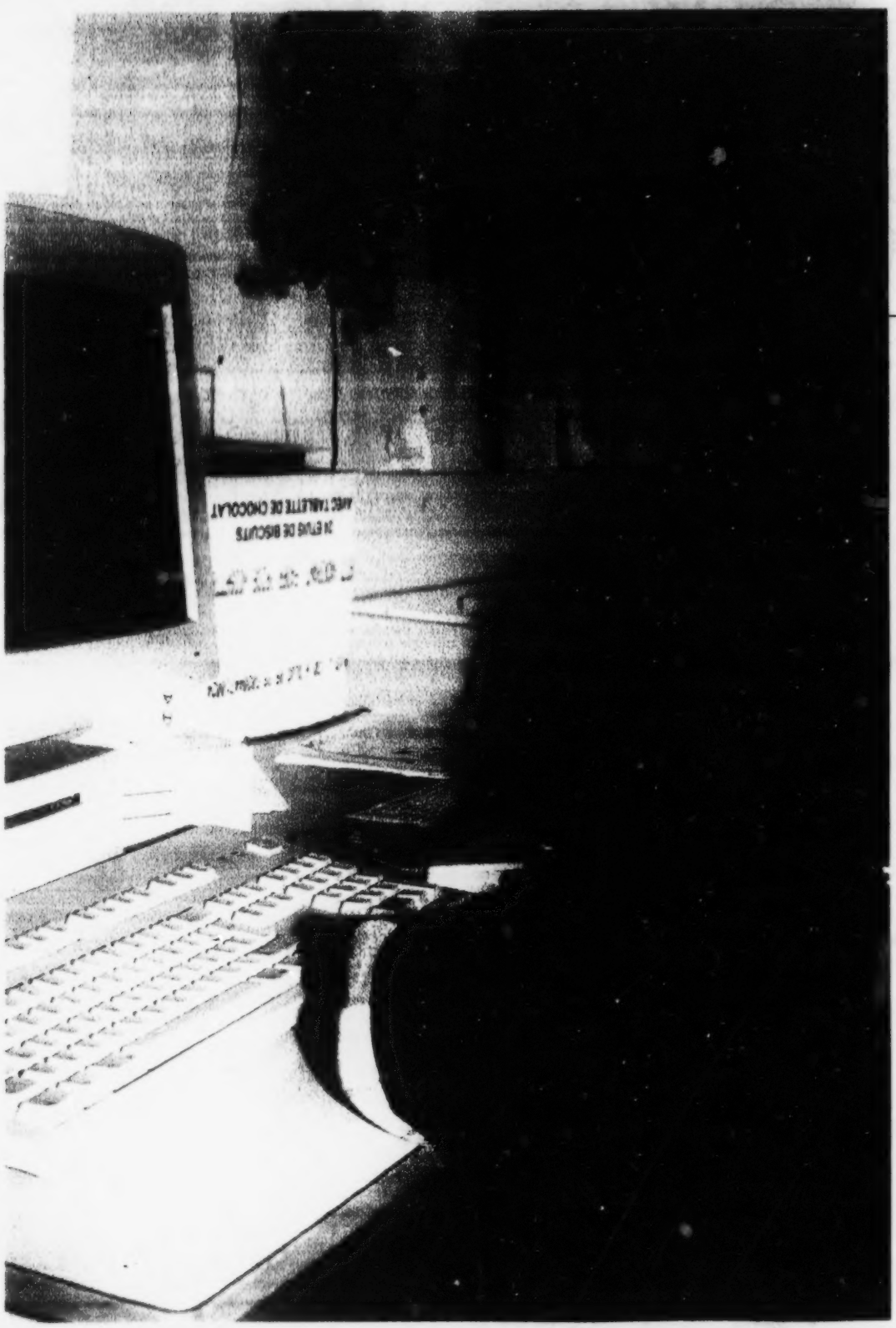

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CHAPTER THREE

Equalizing Opportunity: A Community Approach, An Early Start

In France, disadvantaged children of various ages are identified not according to their family's income, but according to where they live. These geographic areas, identified by the government as disadvantaged, are designated as "educational priority zones," or "ZEPs" *(Zone d'Education Prioritaire)*.

The goal is to increase the quality of education in a community where there is a high rate of school failure. Today, there are 558 such zones – up from just eight in 1989. Most are located in large urban centers of France.

What occurs in a ZEP that does not elsewhere? Each zone develops its own council and partnerships with other institutions within the zone, such as social service agencies. They might take on a project, such as helping children and families improve their French while maintaining their home language. ZEP schools receive extra funding to reduce class size, obtain extra materials and employ special teachers if needed. On average, there are two fewer children per class in ZEPs than in other schools.

Teachers who work in a ZEP school receive extra training and a bonus to encourage staff stability. Like other areas outside of the ZEP zone, nearly 100 percent of three- to five-year-old children within the ZEPs attend the preschools. Almost 40 percent of the two-year-olds attend preschool in the ZEPs compared to about 35 percent outside.

These zones stand in contrast to the Federal Head Start program in the U.S., a comprehensive preschool education program for low-income children and their families, which one delegate characterized as "a beacon for low-income families that maintains profound respect

"I am for universal child care and preschool, but I think it is important to start with the most needy. I think empowerment zones and enterprise communities, inner cities and isolated rural areas may be a good starting point for child development policy efforts here."

Margaret Wang, Distinguished University Professor and Director of the Temple University Center for Research in Human Development and Education

Computer programs are popular with children and are used to enhance their language development.

COMPUTERS FOR PLAY AND LEARNING

Five five-year-olds crowd around a computer screen in a preschool classroom in France, laughing at a picture and pecking at the keyboard. A digitized picture of a cat has appeared on the screen, while a soft, synthesized voice repeats a sentence the children have randomly created: "Le chat a sauté sur le camion pour attraper les souris" (The cat jumped on the truck to catch mice).

The scene looks in part like a raucous game, in part like an advanced form of language development, and it is occurring in several hundred écoles maternelles in France as an aid to young children learning language. For some of those children, who are recent immigrants to France, the computer offers a way of acquiring what is for them a foreign language.

"Even if they can't write legibly or easily, they can punch keys," said Dr. Rachel Cohen, a researcher at the University of Paris-Nord, who headed a team that has developed specialized software for French preschoolers. "Technology is playing an essential role in changing what is possible with young children."

The programs are designed to engage children in developing language on many levels at once – by offering pictures, words and sound together. Then, moving beyond what would be available in a book, for example, the child can manipulate the images, letters and sounds to create words, ideas, sentences and stories, always with the gentle synthesized voice feeding back.

A basic word list of about 120 animals and other objects is offered to the children. Sometimes a teacher writes down a sentence the child can transpose onto the screen. Gradually, children become more independently involved, delighted by the funny sounds that are emitted when the voice pronounces a misspelled word, or when the voice pronounces the child's name, over and over.

These computers in the French preschool classroom offer one more example of excellent teaching coupled with children's enjoyment. The consequence is not only language development for all children, including non-native French speakers, but an extremely popular medium, which in some classrooms has eclipsed even recess and snack time as the place where children most like to play together.

"I am fascinated by the immense potential of all children," Cohen said. "If children are immersed in a nurturing and stimulating environment, there is no such thing as 'a candidate for school failure.'"

for diversity." But Head Start serves about 40 percent of all eligible children, and the typical nine-month, half-day format must be supplemented for families who require full-day, full-year programs. Only families at or below the Federal poverty line are eligible for Head Start, though recent changes in some states are including some just above the poverty line. And Head Start is often a one-year program with the majority (60%) being four-year-olds.

In France, it has become a national priority, based on French research, to

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increase the coverage for two-year-olds in these economically disadvantaged areas. For them, spending time in an *école maternelle* may be more beneficial than living at home in an unstimulating environment.

Researchers from the University of Burgundy, in a 1992 study released by the French National Department of Education, entitled "Starting Preschool at Two Years Old," found that if a child from a disadvantaged area begins preschool at the age of two, he or she is more likely to outperform a poor child in language, math and behavioral skills who starts at age three or four. And the effect is long lasting.

More advantaged children also benefit by earlier *école maternelle* experience, the study found, but not as much as two-year-olds living in the ZEP zones.

To at least one French-American Foundation delegate, Margaret Wang, Distinguished University Professor and Director of the Temple University Center for Research in Human Development and Education, the zoned approach has a direct application to the U.S. She said new preschool initiatives should be linked to Federally-designated empowerment zones and enterprise communities, where economic development should begin with families and children.

"I am for universal child care and preschool, but I think it is important to start with the most needy," she said. "I think empowerment zones and enterprise communities, inner cities and isolated rural areas may be a good starting point for child development policy efforts here."

AT A GLANCE:

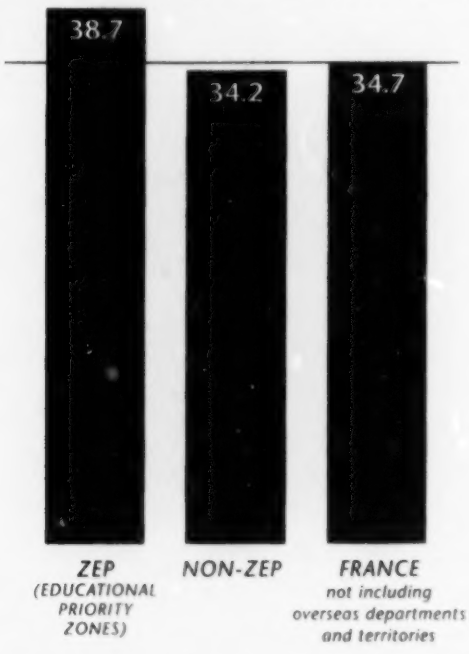
ZEP

- *Communities, not families, identified for aid*
- *School councils link to other institutions for support*
- *Teachers receive extra training and pay*
- *Schools receive extra funding, materials and personnel*
- *Studies show* **école maternelle** *especially important for youngest children*

U.S. HEAD START

- *Children's eligibility determined by family income, typically below or at the poverty line*
- *Insufficient funding to reach all eligibles*
- *Teachers have relatively low salaries and limited health care and other benefits*
- *Teachers vary in their qualification, training and pay*

FIG. 2
PERCENTAGE OF 2-YEAR-OLDS ENROLLED IN ECOLE MATERNELLE *(1997)*



Source: L'Etat de l'Ecole, Ministère de l'Education Nationale, de la Recherche et de la Technologie, Paris, October 1998.

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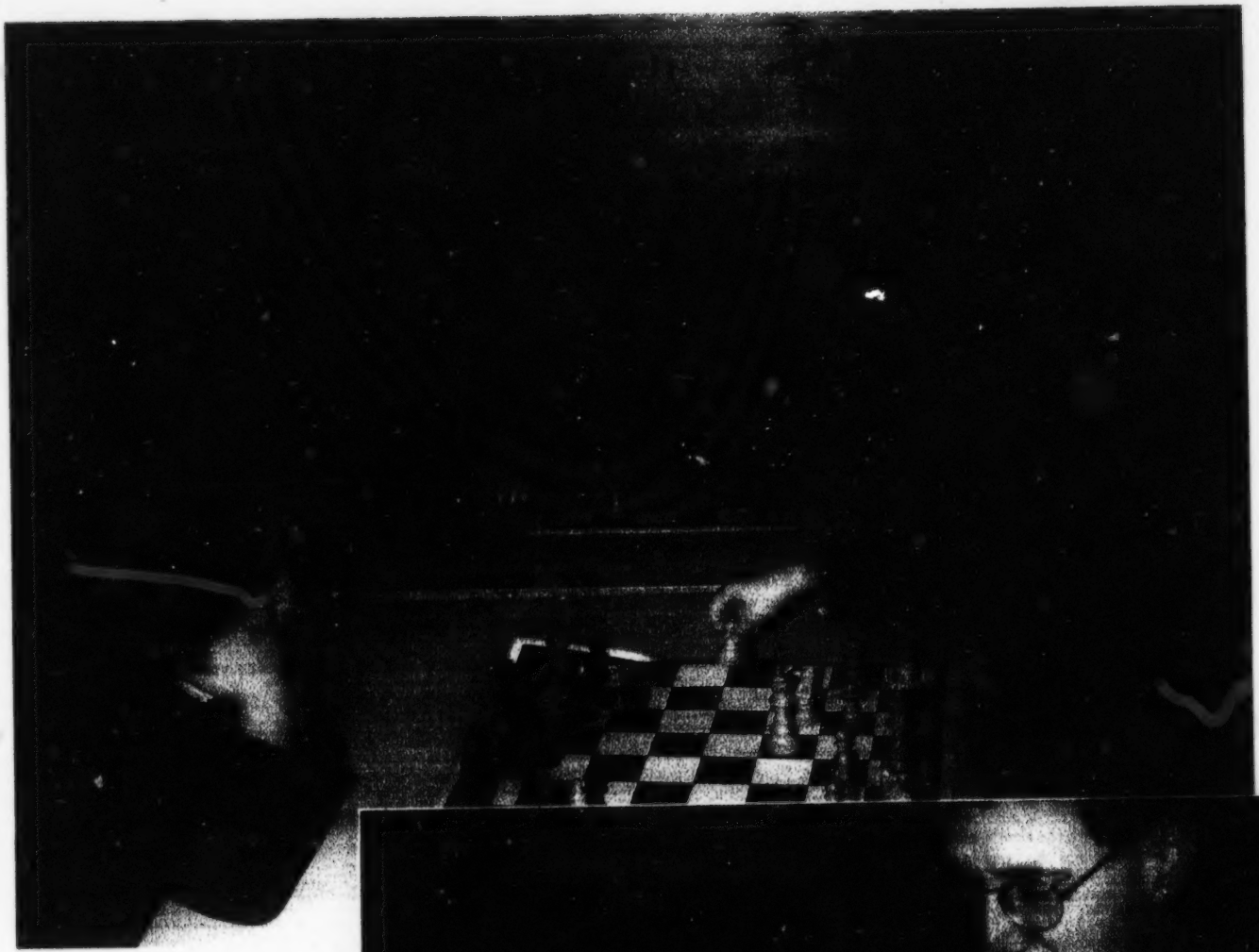

Preschool teachers follow a rigorous training and earn the equivalent of primary school teachers.

Delegate Paul Goren talks to a preschooler.

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CHAPTER FOUR

A Match Made In France: Best Teachers + Youngest Students

"The fact that France gives so much attention to creating such highly-qualified staff is a real lesson to the U.S. Here we have some places that require nothing more than a high school diploma and where compensation is often inadequate."

Joan Lombardi, Senior Associate at the Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University

In the American economic pecking order, some might call it an injustice. The average child care worker's $6.12 hourly wage places that profession somewhere below parking lot attendants, bus drivers, garbage collectors and some bartenders, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

That a workforce with so much influence over a child's, even a nation's, future should be paid so little also hurts children. It means, for example, that a revolving door of workers, recording a 30 percent turnover rate, according to a 1998 report of the Center for the Child Care Work Force, repeatedly ruptures the relationship between child and adult. It is a relationship that research now tells us is crucial to a child's later success.

Even if the relationship remains strong, the adult may not be trained or know how to provide an educational experience. Some 40 percent of staff in early education and care centers have a high-school level of education or less, according to a 1990 figure released by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Those figures are changing, as some states toughen training requirements for teachers, while others try to strengthen the system by adding licensing for younger years. But given the low earnings and often inadequate training of teachers, the quality of a child's early education and care in the U.S. is still likely to be dictated by chance.

These markers of the U.S. child care workforce stand in stark contrast to those in France. Since 1991, an essential hallmark of France's early childhood workforce is that it enjoys the same training and

salaries as elementary teachers. The *école maternelle* is viewed as inextricably tied to education, together with its concomitant teacher training. Once licensed, these early childhood teachers can teach from two- to 11-year-olds. While a U.S. preschool teacher might earn about $15,000 annually, a French preschool teacher begins her career earning somewhat less, but her compensation includes generous health and retirement benefits, paid holidays and job security. By the end of her career, she could earn close to $30,000 annually, together with substantial benefits.

"French teachers demonstrated skill and experience, with well-planned activities and an ability to work with large numbers of children."

To American visitors, French teachers demonstrated skill and experience, with well-planned activities and an ability to work with large numbers of children. They seemed entrepreneurial, invested in their work and self-respecting, many delegates said.

"In my experience as a mother and as a journalist covering these issues, I've rarely seen in the U.S. the kind of high-caliber preschool teachers we routinely saw in the French system," said Cathy Trost, Director of the Casey Journalism Center for Children and Families at the University of Maryland. "Journalists here in America are beginning to understand how mediocre our own early childhood efforts are, and how important it is to look at models like France and the respect it accords teachers, as they chronicle the building movement for change in the U.S."

Sheila B. Kamerman, Senior Program Consultant to the French-American Foundation and Columbia University scholar, said: "The French place a very high value on well-trained preschool teachers and well-trained staff. This is reflected in the salaries paid, in the respect teachers are awarded, and in the fact that turnover rates are less than 10 percent. That is in contrast to the U.S., where the salaries are crummy, the staff gets no respect from the public at large, and the turnover can be extremely high."

In France, Kamerman said, "The parents talk about teachers with respect, and the early childhood staff take it for granted that they will have that kind of respect."

French preschool teachers come by that respect through rigorous training – in a system that was radically overhauled in 1991. Before that, early childhood teachers did not need a university degree. With the 1991 reform, they now must have four years of higher education.

Teachers must first earn a three-year university degree. This is fol-

Well-educated teachers are well-equipped to deliver quality.

lowed by at least one year of training at a university-based teacher training institute, the *Institut Universitaire de Formation des Maîtres*, to receive what would be the U.S. equivalent of a master's degree in early childhood and elementary education.

Training at the teacher institutes, paid for by the French government, is rigorous and competitive. To enter the training program, candidates have two options. They may spend a year at the teacher institute studying a wide variety of subjects in preparation for a national exam or they may choose other ways of preparation. The failure rate of the national exam is high; in 1997, about half of those who took the test passed. The exam consists of written and oral components.

Successful candidates proceed to a one-year program which consists of course work and two months of practice teaching in schools. The number of students who may enter this program is a function of the number of available teaching positions. In 1998 in Paris, for example, 700 candidates were vying for 300 spaces. During the training year, candidates receive a salary from the Ministry of Education. Upon completion, they receive their teaching license and are assured a job.

Training does not stop once the teachers are employed. Teachers

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SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

ASSISTANTS

Each teacher is helped by an assistant for at least half the day. Assistants might prepare materials for activities, take children to the bathroom, clean classrooms or help teachers to supervise outdoor play. They often establish close relationships with children. Trained on the job, they can take advantage of in-service training.

DIRECTOR OR HEAD TEACHER

The director, or head teacher, assumes the administrative responsibilities of the école maternelle, *managing the teaching team, maintaining a dialogue with the authorities and working with parents, other schools and the wider community. The director plays no role in hiring or firing of staff, since that is the responsibility of the national government. Directors are licensed teachers who have completed several additional weeks of training for their role.*

INSPECTORS AND PEDAGOGICAL COUNSELORS

Each inspector guides roughly 250 to 350 teachers working in a group of écoles maternelles *and primary schools, with assessments of teachers taken every two years. The inspector ensures that public schools are properly administered, and that national rules governing education and curriculum are followed in public schools, as well as in private schools receiving public aid.*

Pedagogical advisers – teachers who have qualified to train teachers – mainly support and train new teachers, and may specialize in a particular area, such as art, music or sports.

may participate in 36 weeks of training during their careers, in courses offered by the teacher institutes, and teachers normally will take up to 60 percent of that training. Most courses focus on curriculum at the *école maternelle*. Participating teachers receive 100 percent of their salary to attend the training, while replaced in the classrooms by teacher candidates from the institutes.

And teachers may advance in their careers: to director, pedagogical advisor or inspector for pre-elementary and elementary education. Even if they do not choose to advance, most remain for their entire careers in a job that offers security, defined hours, three paid months off each year and generous health and retirement benefits.

To American delegates, there was much to admire in the French system of teacher training. "What is most impressive is that the French actually redesigned their teacher-training program," said Paul Goren, Director of Child and Youth Development for the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. "They have upgraded the profession, especially at the preschool level."

"The fact that France gives so much attention to creating such highly-qualified staff is a real lesson to the U.S.," said Joan Lombardi, a Senior Associate at the Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University. "Here we have some places that require nothing more than a high school diploma and where compensation is often inadequate."

"The French emphasis on quality teachers should be viewed as one of the pillars of a quality preschool system," said Karen Hill-Scott.

"If we could get this country to agree to create a universal welcome into society for every child, then we really have to have good teachers," she said. "The quality of teaching becomes the infrastructure of that program. We know what to do. The knowledge and talent are here. We need only the financing and commitment."

AT A GLANCE:

FRANCE

- *Licensed in rigorous, competitive process*
- *Attain equivalent of master's degree in U.S.*
- *Pay equivalent to elementary teachers with benefits*
- *Low rate of turnover*
- *Eligible for 36 weeks of in-service training during career*
- *Supported in classroom by aides*
- *Assessed in review by inspectors*

U.S.

- *Training requirements vary from state to state*
- *High rate of turnover*
- *Eligible for some in-service training*
- *Poorly paid, often without benefits*
- *Classroom support and performance reviews vary*

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CHAPTER FIVE

Preschool Plus: Cushions For Families

"There is a recognition in France of the need for close integration of care and education. So increasingly, wraparound services are available and heavily subsidized. They are viewed as especially important for kids whose parents' work day is longer than the school day and for those who come from backgrounds in which French is not the language used at home."

Sheila B. Kamerman, Compton Foundation Centennial Professor at Columbia University's School of Social Work, and Director of the University's Institute for Child and Family Policy.

In the heart of an immigrant community in Paris, among dilapidated old buildings and crowded and littered streets, a spectacular block-long storefront stands out like a jewel. The logo on the window is of a beautiful open door. Inside, there are sofas and chairs covered in fabric with an African motif. Steps and slides, a playhouse, toys and books create a state-of-the-art small world for children.

This upscale-looking place is called The Golden Door, and the name is apt. It has been designed by architects, paid for by the local municipality and a group of donors, and conceived by professionals almost literally as an open door for the immigrant children in the neighborhood who are entering the *école maternelle*, according to Columbia University professors Sheila Kamerman and Alfred Kahn, who described the Golden Door in their 1994 report, "A Welcome For Every Child."

The program serving families from Senegal, Mali, Tunisia, Morocco and the French West Indies, represents a new genre of services for families in France that complements the *école maternelle*. Some programs look like the Golden Door, act as supports for French immigrants, and are free or charge a modest fee. Others take the form of health services for all children, offered at the *école*. There are also extended hours of care wrapped around school hours for working families, whose numbers have increased as mothers with young children enter the workforce.

Children play outdoors during an after-school program organized at their preschool.

In fact, France and the U.S. share this last social trend: the rates at which women with young children have joined the workforce. The two rates straddle 60 percent.

But the degree of support available to French and American families with young children diverges quickly. In America, arrangements are largely a private matter among families, who may strain to interlock child care, baby-sitting, relatives' or neighbors' care, or nursery schools to span the hours of their family's working life. For lower-

ADDITIONAL SERVICES FOR PRESCHOOL-AGED AND YOUNGER CHILDREN

HALTES GARDERIES

These centers, which may be public or private, provide occasional short-term care and part-time regular care for children from two months to six years (primarily, though, for children under three). The games and activities, organized by a team-trained staff, enable children to become familiar with group life. Opening hours are flexible and vary according to parents' needs. Children may stay anywhere from one hour to several half-days per week, on a regular basis.

ASSISTANTES MATERNELLES

Licensed family day care providers are home-based and may care for a maximum of three children other than their own. They are monitored by a specially trained pediatric nurse who visits them regularly. The providers' compensation includes social benefits and in-service training. Parents receive financial support from the government to off-set the cost of the providers' social security and a tax deduction.

CRÈCHES

These centers are for infants and toddlers of working parents. They welcome children from two months to three years of age for up to 11 hours a day, on a year-round basis. The centers emphasize developmentally appropriate activities and are supervised by specially trained pediatric nurses. The nationally specified ratio for adults and children is one adult for five infants who do not walk and one adult to eight toddlers who do.

income families, that has historically meant all-day child care. For middle- and upper-income families, half-day nursery schools have often been combined with other care at home.

In France, in contrast, it is as if someone asked: "How can we nurture children and make life easier for their families?" and then designed a series of cushions to fit all around the *école maternelle*. Already, the *école maternelle* combines care and education into a six-hour day. But at the end of that preschool day, and even before and during it, there are other services aimed at helping families meet their needs.

"There is a recognition in France of the need for close integration of care and education," said Kamerman, a Columbia University professor who has written extensively on comparative child and family policy. "So increasingly, wraparound services are available and heavily subsidized. They are viewed as especially important for kids whose parents' work day is longer than the school day and for those who come from backgrounds in which French is not the language used at home."

Children whose parents work before and/or after the *école maternelle* is in session have several

options. They can go to supervised, before- or after-school child care, held at or near the school. This care is provided by municipalities in cooperation with schools, and is usually supervised by students with some training.

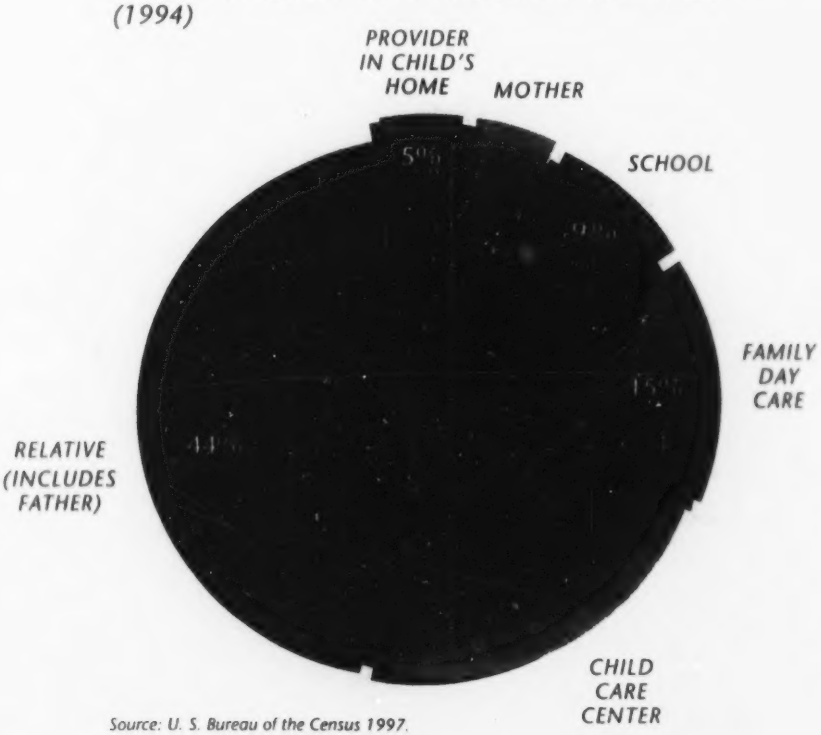
Or, young children can attend recreation centers, *Centres de Loisirs sans Hébergement*, which serve a larger age span – from two to 17. These centers also function when schools are closed or on holiday and are available at a fee on a sliding scale according to family income. They are staffed by recreation workers, who may also work at school during the *école maternelle's* two-hour lunch break.

Beyond these supports, there is also a system of preventive maternal and child health care that uses the *école maternelle* as its link to young patients.

Since 1992, this health care system – *Protection Maternelle et Infantile*, or PMI – has conducted health exams for all four-year-old children at

"In France it is as if someone asked: 'How can we nurture children and make life easier for their families?'"

FIG. 3
FORMS OF CHILD CARE IN THE U.S. FOR PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN WITH WORKING MOTHERS (1994)



Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census 1997. Report P70-62, Table A. As reprinted in Brookings, *April 1999, No. 1*

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the *école maternelle*. The new mandate came after research showed children treated at this age had fewer medical, visual, hearing and behavior problems by the time they reached elementary school than those who had no exam. The PMI system also plays a role, through its trained staff, in successfully integrating children with special needs into early childhood programs.

There are also places like The Golden Door, a free program that offers a meeting place for parents, usually mothers, and their young children. They may wander in just to talk with other mothers while their children romp in more open spaces than they may be used to at home. The program is aimed at children who are kept at home and who may have no direct early experience in French language, mores or culture. Many such children had been entering the *école maternelle* at age four with no ability to speak French.

"Many French experts and educators are convinced that poor, immigrant children who lack access to resources are vulnerable to school failure if they don't receive help when they are very young," said Juan Sepúlveda, Director of The Common Enterprise in San Antonio, Texas. "These kinds of experiences, that stress learning through play and offer opportunities for informal socialization along with support for their parents, do appear to be catching on in France. With our demographics in the U.S., we could certainly use a similar approach."

AT A GLANCE:

FRANCE

- *Education and care from age two viewed as worthy of public support*
- *Lunchtime, before-and-after school care provided by local authorities*
- *Recreation centers offered to families on sliding scale*
- *Health exams at* école maternelle
- *Support programs for immigrant families and others in need*

U.S.

- *Early education and care historically viewed as a private matter for parents to solve*
- *Early education and care largely based on ability to pay*
- *Health care responsibility of parents under personal, employer-based plan or public assistance*
- *States are beginning to recognize need to integrate Head Start, pre-kindergarten, and child care programs into full-day, year-round offerings*

CHAPTER SIX

Who Does What? A Jumble And A Chain

"There is electoral accountability in France. Whether we spoke to conservative politicians in the most affluent suburb of Paris, or communists and socialists in the poorest areas, both said their failure to act on educational issues for young children would cause them to lose votes. The citizenry believes that strongly in the system."

Doug Price, former President of First Bank of Colorado, now President of Educare Colorado, a nonprofit organization promoting quality child care in that state.

A roomful of preschoolers, provided with crayons, draws randomly on a large piece of paper. The result might look like a chaotic jumble, a rabbit's warren, or a diagram of the structure and governance of early childhood education and care in the U.S., at least according to some early childhood experts, who have described the fragmented system in just those words.

That is in contrast to France, where a diagram might look like a chain – of funding and accountability, clear and delineated, each linked to the other. The central government, through the Ministry of Education, is responsible for educational content, as well as for salaries and management of the teaching staff. Local authorities own school buildings and pay for infrastructure, and are responsible for non-teaching staff.

For visiting American delegates of the French-American Foundation Study Tour, the French system offers neither a perfect system nor one to be replicated; after all, early childhood education and care, while funded through Federal programs, has increasingly become the responsibility of individual states. But it does offer a different view of what is possible in the U.S.

"France has this combination of state and local investment, and it is worked out in such a way that everybody has their role," said Joan Lombardi, formerly an official on child and family policy with the

Clinton Administration, now a Senior Associate at the Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University. "I think we have a lot of ambiguity about who should do what, which adversely affects the quality of services."

Mark Greenberg, Senior Staff Attorney for the Center for Law and Social Policy, said "I think some of the specific details of France's national structure have limited relevance for us, because the U.S. doesn't have a national educational system. At the same time, the idea of a national vision and national goals – and ensuring that resources are there so that the programs can be implemented across the country – has clear relevance for the U.S."

In the U.S., the structure and governance of early education and child care remains disjointed. The Federal government funds Head Start, the preschool program for very low-income children, which is administered locally. It also offers child care tax credits directly to families. And it provides child care block grants to states to operate their own programs, as well as some other special funds.

Today, more than 40 states operate their own pre-kindergarten programs in varying locations: public and private schools, community agencies, child care centers and even home-based programs. Most are administered by state departments of education, though a few are not. Each has its own set of goals and guidelines. Oversight is conducted by state licensing bureaus, some of them weak, others strong.

"For U.S. communities, early education and care appears as a mix of public and private, profit and non-profit centers. This mosaic, while offering choice, can be difficult to monitor, and stands in the way of a coordinated system."

For U.S. communities, early education and care appears as a mix of public and private, profit and non-profit centers. This mosaic, while offering choice, can be difficult to monitor, and stands in the way of a coordinated system, as programs compete for children and money. For parents, this jumble can be bewildering, and has been called a "silent crisis."

France's answer to this patchwork is a system that begins, on the national level, with the Ministry of Education – an administrative structure that reinforces the educational focus of the *école maternelle*. While it oversees all of France's publicly-funded *écoles maternelles*, the Ministry of Education also supervises France's private preschools, attended by just 12 percent of children. It contracts with the schools, which are mostly religious, to provide teachers' salaries and training. Parents pay tuition fees.

Local authorities own and manage public school buildings and equipment and provide the supplies, materials and furniture in the schools. Local authorities also pay for non-teaching staff, run the school cafeterias, and organize supervision during the mid-day break. They work with schools to provide out-of-school care.

Even at the local level, these responsibilities are well-defined. Each school is governed by a school council that provides advice on how to run the schools. The council, which is overseen by the school director and composed of teachers and par-

THE LOOK OF QUALITY

What does a good early childhood program look like? First and foremost, the children must be engaged, busy and happy. Here are some other characteristics designed to create the best experience for children:

THE TEACHER:

- *Is engaged with children – asking questions, sharing information, listening closely, observing and directing*
- *Can be easily approached by any of the children in her care*
- *Can describe each child's strengths and interests, and communicate that to parents*
- *Can manage conflicts between children through prevention, redirection and play*
- *Offers abundant praise and play opportunities for every child*
- *Can talk about what to expect from children at that age, and how the curriculum supports good child development*
- *Is engaged in ongoing, comprehensive personal and professional development.*

THE PROGRAM:

- *Has a plan every day for children to work in small groups, large groups, and alone*
- *Provides opportunities for unstructured free play as well as organized activities*
- *Offers daily experiences that include music, story time, artistic expression, dramatic play, block play, and small manipulatives*
- *Encourages children to read a variety of books and ensures that children are read to*
- *Displays art work and projects*
- *Provides opportunity for children to jump, run, climb, ride, balance, dig, shovel and swing – using all parts of their bodies*
- *Promotes social, emotional, cognitive and physical development.*

THE PLACE:

- *Protects and promotes child safety and good hygiene*
- *Is designed to a child's scale and for a child's needs and is organized to facilitate a child's development and learning*
- *Accommodates and supports adult staff to deliver quality care*
- *Allows children to build and explore structures*
- *Contains materials for children to count, sort, mix, categorize and explore similarities and differences among things*
- *Contains materials for children to look at books, draw, write, paint, do collage and sew.*

Sources: Mary L. Culkin, Principal Investigator for the Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers Study at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center; Meera Mani, President of the Clayton Foundation; and Karen Hill-Scott, early childhood consultant.

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ents, also establishes school projects, which might be on anything from China to the environment. The process is meant to encourage collaboration among *école maternelle* staff, children and parents.

France's enforcement of the *écoles maternelles* is conducted by national inspectors, who focus on assisting and monitoring teachers. The essence of good programs for young children, it is believed, is a well-educated and well-trained child care work force. Their visits to the *écoles maternelles* are unannounced, so that staff members must be ready for an inspection at any time. However, inspections are infrequent, once every year or two, and there is an assumption that well-educated teachers are well-equipped to deliver quality.

Perhaps the most important form of accountability in France, though, is that of elected officials to the electorate. Whether in rich or poor neighborhoods, conservative or liberal, elected officials said there would be a price paid for failing to fully support the *école maternelle*.

"I was talking with the mayor of Issy-les-Moulineaux," recalled Delaine Eastin, State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the California Department of Education. "I said, 'So, you have six or seven political parties here in France. When there's a recession, which one suggests that you cut preschool right away?' With a deep throaty guttural laugh, he said, 'No one would dare!' It's as if someone here were running for office and wanted to discontinue public education. You'd run him out of town."

As a model, the French structure for preschools gave delegate Augusta Souza Kappner, President of Bank Street College of Education in New York City, some ideas for her own community. "I think the model of using different levels of government to fund what, taken together, forms a total service is worth looking at as we try to make universal pre-kindergarten work for us here," she said.

AT A GLANCE:

FRANCE

- *National government develops curriculum, pays and trains teachers and ensures quality of teaching staff*
- *Local entities pay costs of school buildings, materials, infrastructure*
- *Local school councils determine school projects*
- *Accountability through national inspectors who oversee teachers*
- *Electoral accountability – broad-based support across parties*

U.S.

- *State and local governments administer programs, with most funding coming from the Federal government*
- *Variety in programs and accountability from state to state*
- *Range of quality and program types in local communities*
- *Federally-funded Head Start, block grants and tax credits*
- *Lack of electoral interest – no broad base of support*

CHAPTER SEVEN

From Costs to Policy: Questions and Answers for the U.S.

"Let's do what the French do, but do it our way."

Nancy Folbre, Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts, and an expert on the economics of child-rearing.

The costs of early education and care in the U.S. can be broken down in a single child care dollar. One penny of that dollar comes from the private sector. The government pays in about 39 cents. That leaves nearly 60 pennies that come from the pockets of families.

The question for the U.S. might be: should the government begin to pay more of those pennies of the child care dollar, and if so, for which families and for children of what age?

France offers one answer: local and national government pays for almost everything, for everybody, at a consistent level of quality, starting for all children at the age of three.

To the delegates on the study tour, the French model is a worthy goal with a single overarching message for the U.S. – its national commitment to children.

"It's a simple message but a very committed message: to provide healthy education and development to every child," said Margaret Wang, Executive Director of Temple University's Center for Research in Human Development and Education. "We have this aspiration but we don't have the visionary statement that commits the country to children. I think that is a very important first step."

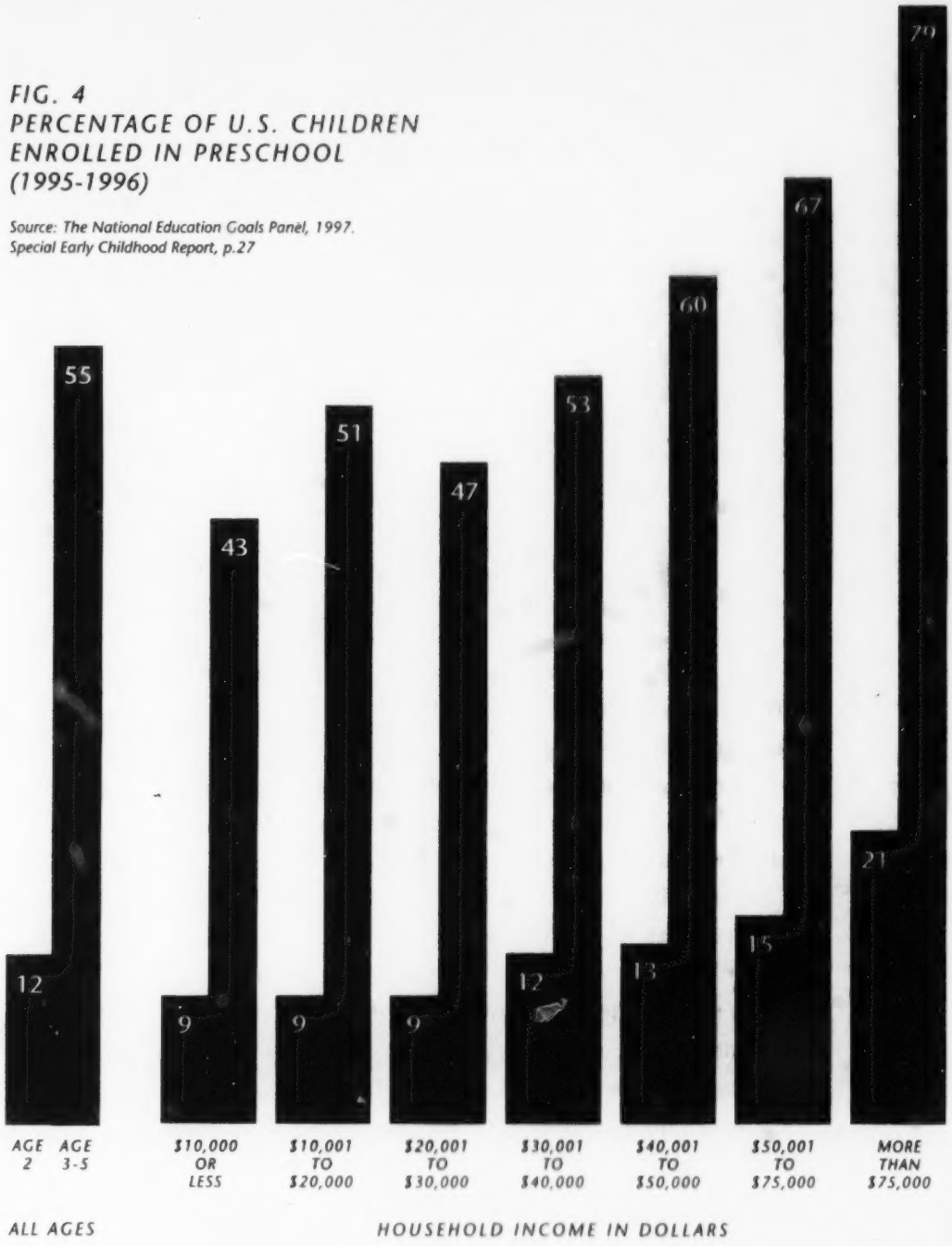
Policy would flow from there, and delegates had mixed views on how to achieve it. Many subscribed to the view of Nancy Folbre, Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts and an expert on the economics of child-rearing. "Let's do what the French do, but do it our way," she said.

"When your monthly child care bill is more than your rent, that's an important problem that society needs to look at. At one point, we were spending well over 50 percent of our income on child care. How can you achieve the American Dream when child care, no matter where you go, costs so much money?"

John James, schoolteacher in Patterson, N.J., and father of two young children.

FIG. 4
PERCENTAGE OF U.S. CHILDREN ENROLLED IN PRESCHOOL (1995-1996)

Source: The National Education Goals Panel, 1997. Special Early Childhood Report, p.27

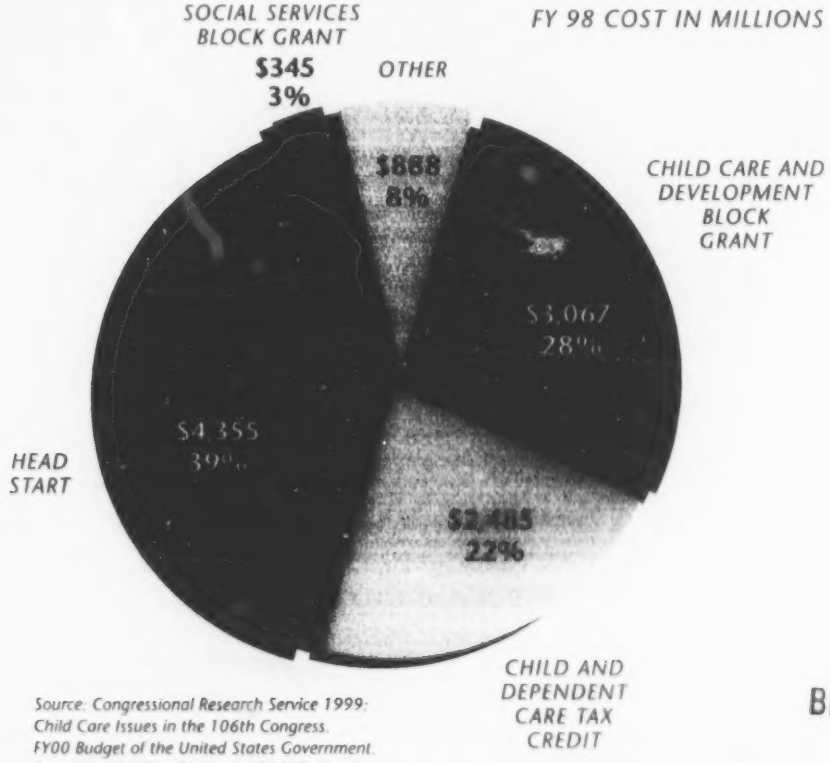


So far, the economic distance between the French and the American way is large, though with similar annual costs per child. The current U.S. role in early education and care has been described as fragmented, inconsistent and limited mostly to low-income families. It pays for child care block grants, tax credits to families with children in care, which generally benefit the middle class, and Head Start, aimed at children in poverty.

The U.S. lags far behind other industrialized nations in its aid for early education and care. Government policies have not kept pace with new career patterns in families, whether two parents or a single parent work outside the home. Whatever the family arrangements, parents are not eligible for government support unless they have very low incomes.

In blunt and practical terms, families foot most of the child care bill, and that means that the wealthy can afford care while the poor may not. A spectrum of studies bear this out. Low-income families devote a quarter of their income to child care costs, or use unpaid care of limited quality, says a 1999 Brookings Institution report. Wealthier families are twice as likely as the poor to send their children to preschool, according to a 1997 National Education Goals Panel report. And the government's tax credits leave the working poor in a vacuum:

FIG. 5
U.S. FEDERAL EXPENDITURES ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE ($11,140 MILLION)



Source: Congressional Research Service 1999: Child Care Issues in the 106th Congress. FY00 Budget of the United States Government. As reprinted in Brookings, *April 1999, No. 1*

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GEORGIA: A CASE STUDY

The accolades have poured in for Georgia's universal pre-kindergarten program for four-year-olds, as well as for the person who created it, former Georgia Governor Zell Miller. His approval rating topped 80 percent as he prepared to leave office last January, just after he was named "Public Official of the Year" by Governing magazine.

The story of the pre-K program's creation, as detailed in a draft report by researcher Anthony Raden for the Foundation for Child Development, appears to be a story of the best of American politics at work – strong leadership, compromise, responsiveness to criticism and change, and a willingness to work with all players.

Why look at Georgia? While a number of other states in the country have moved toward large-scale pre-K programs, Georgia's is the most far-reaching and mature, wrote Raden, now a research scientist at Columbia University's National Center for Children in Poverty.

The program began in 1993, after Georgia voters and the state's General Assembly approved a state lottery. Miller had crusaded for the lottery to fund pre-kindergarten.

As first envisioned, the program was designed to serve at-risk four-year-olds. In its first year, under Georgia's Department of Education, grants were awarded to only 20 providers serving 750 children.

Then the program quickly expanded. By 1995, Georgia became the first state to offer voluntary pre-school to all four-year-olds, a move that was partly designed to ensure the continued success of the program.

"If we came out and tried to push a program for poor kids, we were not going to get a whole lot of support," said Mike Volmer, who became the administrator of the pre-K program. "And so, we made the decision to push a program that would touch all Georgians."

During the expansion, the program built bridges to Georgia's Head Start program and sought to incorporate for-profit child care providers, who had been reluctant to participate. The for-profits became critical to the program's success because they provided facilities – one of the major obstacles in developing many pre-K programs across the country.

In 1996, Georgia went a step further when Governor Miller established an independent state agency, the Office of School Readiness, a move supported by the press, opposed by others. The Office of School Readiness streamlined administration and introduced a customer-service orientation, Raden wrote. Volmer, the head of the Office, waged a public-relations campaign that stressed academics and presented pre-K as an experiment in school choice.

Today the program serves 60,000 children at a cost of more than $200 million annually – funds that come entirely from the state's lottery. The Atlanta Journal and Constitution *has called the pre-K program "a source of deserved pride for the state." In 1997, Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government awarded the program the Innovations in American Government Award, calling the program "remarkable."*

Source: Anthony Raden, *Universal Prekindergarten in Georgia: A Case Study on the Development and Implementation of Georgia's Lottery-Funded Prekindergarten Program.* New York: Foundation for Child Development, 1999.

if they earn less than $25,000, they receive no benefit (1998 IRS Statistics of Income Bulletin).

Head Start provides some aid but is not fully funded, serving just 40 percent of low-income families who are eligible.

While cost comparisons between countries are difficult, these realities stand in contrast to France's system of early education and care. In 1997, France spent 47 billion francs, about $7.2 billion, for pre-elementary education serving about 2.5 million children. According to the Congressional Research Service, Federal funding in the U.S. for Head Start, CCDF and tax credits was $11 billion in 1998 for approximately 8.4 million children. However, the U.S. figure does not include state and local funds, and the programs are often part-day.

"All of France's poor and minority children are provided a daily refuge at the école maternelle *from the deprivation they might experience at home."*

The result for France is an equalizing of opportunity. All of France's poor and minority children are provided a daily refuge at the *école maternelle* from the deprivation they might experience at home. At what annual cost per child? About $5,500, combining education with some before-and-after school care for a year, according to French government figures.

Delegate Cathy Trost plays with two preschoolers.

That figure falls within the wide range of costs of caring for and educating a child in the U.S., though those numbers are, literally, all over the map. In Arkansas, for example, it costs about $1,200 for a child to go to preschool for a year. New Jersey's state-funded preschool program is estimated to cost about $8,300 per child, according to a state-by-state analysis by a group of researchers at Yale University, published this year in the *American Psychologist*. A 1998 Children's Defense Fund survey found costs of between $3,000 and $7,000. Head Start costs about $5,000 per child for a half-day, part-year program.

But those U.S. figures come with no assurances on quality.

So, what would it cost the U.S. to do what France does? Isabel Sawhill, a Senior Fellow in Economic Studies at the Brookings

Delegates Doug Price and Delaine Eastin read with preschoolers.

Institution, estimates that a high-quality, two-year program in the U.S. could cost about $8,000 annually per child, or some $30 billion per year, if limited to families with incomes of less than $30,000.

But even if the money were provided, there would still be the question of how best to use it. Some American delegates stressed the need for more Federal money, guidelines and control. Sarah Greene, for example, Chief Executive Officer of the National Head Start Association, favors establishing a national office for early childhood education, where oversight, training and evaluation would be conducted. Head Start's national standards could serve as a model, tailored to local communities, she suggests.

Folbre, of the University of Massachusetts, also favored Federal actions. "We can't follow the French system because we have a patchwork of providers and a more decentralized infrastructure," she said. "But we could do the same thing with vouchers and strict quality standards – on a Federal level."

Others argue for state and local action. One of the delegates, David Lawrence, former Publisher of *The Miami Herald*, is now President of the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation. He is working with business and community leaders in Miami-Dade County, Florida, toward a program of "universal readiness" for young children that incorporates

early education and care with child health, prevention of family violence and improving parenting skills. He said a national movement is underway.

"I think the states can play some role in that, the Federal government can play a role, in terms of funding and a bully pulpit. But the real action is going to be people in communities, deciding this is fundamentally important as a matter of decency and wise investment," Lawrence said.

Doug Price, Chairman of Educare Colorado, a nonprofit organization promoting quality child care in that state, emphasizes local control. By "decategorizing" Federal monies with other child care and early education funding, Price would place control in the hands of local governing boards.

"The French system is really built on a national model," said Price, former President of First Bank of Colorado. "The American educational system is built on a local model. I wouldn't try to change that."

Margaret Wang, of Temple University, would not argue with decategorizing funds, but she said the neediest should come first in the quest for universal preschool. She would link early preschool initiatives with government designated empowerment zones and enterprise communities. "I think there's nothing we can do in a very substantial way unless we make children and families central to rebuilding communities," she said.

Joan Lombardi, a Senior Associate at the Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University, said the solution should not be a singular one. "There's no one answer. We're beginning to see more and more people talk about making preschools accessible. I think there's a national movement emerging. It's an issue we have to work on on multiple fronts."

"The French system is really built on a national model, the American educational system is built on a local model. I wouldn't try to change that."

AT A GLANCE:

FRANCE

- *Government spent 47 billion francs, about $7.2 billion, on* école maternelle *in 1997*
- *All* école maternelles *paid by government*
- *Costs about $5,500 per child*
- *Costs pay for consistent quality*

U.S.

- *$11 billion Federal funds spent in 1998 on early education and care, including Head Start, block grants, tax credits and other funds*
- *Most costs paid by families*
- *Costs vary enormously, range from $1,200 to $8,000 per child, with no assurance of quality*

APPENDIX A:
SITE VISITS AND MEETINGS
JANUARY 16 - 24, 1999

ECOLES MATERNELLES

Ecole Maternelle, rue Roquépine, Paris
Ecole Maternelle, rue du Clos, Paris
Ecole Maternelle, rue des Volontaires, Paris
Ecole Maternelle, rue Sévero, Paris
Ecole Maternelle Jules Renard, Clichy-sous-Bois
Ecole Maternelle Joliot Curie, Villejuif
Ecole Maternelle La Roue, Fontenay-aux-Roses
Ecole Maternelle Les Ponceaux, Issy-les-Moulineaux
Ecole Maternelle Lemel, Vanves
Ecole Maternelle Les Acacias, Issy-les-Moulineaux
Ecole Maternelle Frédérique Joliot Curie, Orly

CRÈCHES

Crèche Godefroy Cavaignac, Paris
Crèche Jean-Pierre Timbaud, Paris
Crèche Lafontaine, Issy-les-Moulineaux
Centre de la petite enfance, Issy-les-Moulineaux

PMI CENTERS

PMI Chemin Vert, Paris
PMI Vaucouleurs, Paris

NATIONAL MINISTRY

Ministry of Education

MUNICIPAL OFFICE

Department of School Affairs, City of Paris
Elected City Officials, Issy-les-Moulineaux

ORGANIZATIONS

INRP
CEFISEM

TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

IUFM Batignolles, Paris (Teacher Training Institute)

MEETING WITH PARENTS, PARIS

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APPENDIX B: BIOGRAPHIES OF DELEGATES

DELAINE EASTIN was elected to a second four-year term as State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of California in 1998. The superintendency is a nonpartisan state constitutional office. She is the highest ranking official in California's elementary and secondary public school system and the first woman to be elected State Superintendent. As chair of the Assembly Committee on Education, she sponsored major legislation to reform the K-12 education system and eliminate red tape in school construction. Ms. Eastin also authored the largest school bond in California's history. She is a proponent of universal preschool, class size reduction, funding for libraries, and reviving the arts curriculum in schools. As State Superintendent, she serves as Executive Officer and Secretary of the State Board of Education, and as Director of the California Department of Education.

NANCY FOLBRE is Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts, a position she has held since 1991. She received her Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees from the University of Texas, and her Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Massachusetts. Before joining the faculty of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Dr. Folbre taught at the New School, New York City and at Bowdoin College. Her positions as a visiting scholar include the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*, Paris; the London School of Economics; and the American University. She has worked as a consultant with national and international organizations. Dr. Folbre is a widely published author, co-editor, and has written for many journals. She has received numerous awards and fellowships, notably the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship.

PAUL D. GOREN is Director of the Child and Youth Development, Program on Human and Community Development at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in Chicago, Illinois. He is responsible for grant making in research, policy, and practice including support of Chicago school reform, research on juvenile justice and youth development, and Chicago neighborhood groups focused on out-of-school youth development practices. Dr. Goren's previous positions include Executive Director, Policy and Strategic Services, Minneapolis Public Schools; and Director, Education Policy Studies Division, National Governors' Association. He received his Ph.D. from Stanford University School of Education, California, and is the author of numerous articles and policy papers.

MARK H. GREENBERG is Senior Staff Attorney, specializing in issues relating to federal and state welfare reform initiatives and other aspects of poverty policy, for the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) in Washington, DC. His current work focuses on state implementation of the recently enacted federal welfare legislation and advancement of non-welfare alternatives for poor families. He has written extensively on issues related to state implementation of the Family Support Act of 1988, and on the array of new state initiatives that have arisen through the waiver process in recent years. Mr. Greenberg has recently completed an Atlantic Fellowship in Public Policy at the Department of Public and Social Policy, University of York, United Kingdom. He is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School.

SARAH M. GREENE is Chief Executive Officer of the National Head Start Association (NHSA) in Alexandria, Virginia. She is co-editor of *Head Start Works* and currently serves on a number of boards and advisory panels, including the National Health and Education Consortium, Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, the National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, and the Child Care Action Campaign. Ms. Greene started her career as a teacher in Head Start. As Head Start Ambassador, she led delegates from across the United States to Australia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and twice to China in educational exchange programs. Ms. Greene is the recipient of numerous leadership awards and recognition.

KAREN HILL-SCOTT is President of Karen Hill-Scott & Company, California. She is a nationally recognized expert in child care and development. Her firm is currently managing projects in children's television programming, corporate work-family initiatives, and public policy analysis. Dr. Hill-Scott received her Ed.D. from the University of California, Los Angeles. She is a member of the faculty at the UCLA Graduate School of Urban Planning, and the Management Training Programs for Head Start and Child Care Center Directors at the UCLA-Anderson Graduate School of Management. She serves on the Foundation for Child Development Board, and Co-Chairs the California Department of Education Universal Preschool Taskforce.

SHEILA B. KAMERMAN is the Compton Foundation Centennial Professor at the Columbia University School of Social Work, and Director of the University-wide Institute for Child and Family policy, a center focused on U.S. and comparative child and family policy research, and related activities. Dr. Kamerman received her Ph.D. from Columbia University and has done extensive work in areas such as U.S. and comparative social policy, child and family policies, comparative welfare states and international social welfare. Her current research activities include a 20-country comparative study of family change and family policies in the industrialized countries since World War II, and a study of "best practices" in contracting child and family social services. Dr. Kamerman has consulted widely and serves as senior advisor on this project to the French-American Foundation. She has received numerous honors and awards and authored, co-authored and co-edited more than 30 books.

AUGUSTA SOUZA KAPPNER is President of Bank Street College of Education in New York City. She is responsible for ensuring the College's role as a nationally recognized leader in early childhood education, a pioneer in improving the quality of classroom education, and a national advocate for children and families. Dr. Kappner received her D.S.W. from Columbia University. Before joining Bank Street College, she held the position of Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education, where she managed the Department's vocational, literacy and adult education programs, and reported directly to the Secretary of Education. Other positions included Acting President of City College of New York and President of Borough of Manhattan Community College. Dr. Kappner is the recipient of numerous awards and honors and serves on several boards.

DAVID LAWRENCE, JR. is President of The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation and Distinguished Community Professor/Early Childhood Initiative at Florida International University. He chairs the Children's Services Council of Miami-Dade County. In 1999, he retired as chairman and publisher of *The Miami Herald* to work full-time in the area of early childhood development and readiness. During his tenure at *The Miami Herald*, the paper won five Pulitzer Prizes. As a member of the Governor's Commission on Education, he chaired the Readiness Committee. He was the local convening co-chair of the 1994 Summit of the Americas and served two terms as chair of the national Task Force on Minorities in the Newspaper Business. Dr. Lawrence is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, and is active on several boards.

JOAN LOMBARDI is currently serving as an advisor to a number of foundations and national organizations, and is a Senior Associate at the Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University. She is former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and served as the first Director of the Child Care Bureau. During her years with the Clinton Administration, she was instrumental in planning the White House Conference on Child Care and developing policies for the Administration's Child Care Initiative. Dr. Lombardi also served as staff director for the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Head Start Quality and Expansion and was primary author of *Creating a 21st Century Head Start*.

DOUGLAS PRICE recently retired as President of FirstBank of Colorado. He began his second career – the one in early childhood education – when he chaired Governor Romer's Business Commission on Child Care Financing in 1995. He currently chairs the Governor's Early Child Care and Education Commission, serves on the Task Force on Child Care of the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, and is the co-founder of Educare, a coalition of business, philanthropic and political leaders who are working together to create a high quality, economically viable early care and education system for all of Colorado's young children. Mr. Price is a graduate of the University of Colorado, where he serves as a trustee of the President's Leadership Class. He is a member of the executive committee and immediate past president of the Food Bank of the Rockies.

ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ is currently serving her third term as State Senator from the 4th Senatorial District for the State of Pennsylvania. She has authored comprehensive legislative proposals on child care and early education, youth violence prevention, health insurance reform, and women's health care, which have received widespread attention. Sen. Schwartz played a primary role in the creation of the Children's Health Insurance program. She currently serves as Democratic Chair of the Education Committee and as a member of the Aging and Youth, Appropriations, Banking and Insurance, Finance, and State Government committees. She also serves on a number of national and state associations, boards and commissions, including the State Board of Education and the Pennsylvania Council on Higher Education.

JUAN SEPÚLVEDA is the Executive Director of The Common Enterprise/San Antonio, Texas, an organization dedicated to building a stronger Greater San Antonio area by increasing civic and political participation and leadership, and by informing and improving public policy. He is a member of the Saguaro Seminar and numerous boards, including the Center of Budget and Policy Priorities, the National Civic League and the Center for Policy Alternatives. Mr. Sepúlveda is writing a political biography of Willie Velasquez and an organizational history of the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project. He is a graduate of Harvard University; The Queen's College, Oxford University, where he was a Rhodes Scholar, and holds a law degree from Stanford University.

CATHY TROST is the Director of the Casey Journalism Center for Children and Families, a national resource center for journalists who cover issues about disadvantaged children and families, based at the University of Maryland. Prior to becoming Director of the Center, she was a journalist for nearly 20 years. She came to the Center from *The Wall Street Journal's* Washington Bureau, where she worked as a reporter covering urban affairs and housing, labor and workforce issues, and children's and family issues. Prior to that, Ms. Trost was a reporter of the *Detroit Free Press* and United Press International. She is the author of *Elements of Risk*, a book about the chemical industry. Ms. Trost is a past recipient of an Alicia Patterson Foundation journalism fellowship and currently serves on the Patterson Foundation's Board of Directors.

MARGARET C. WANG is Distinguished University Professor and the founder and Director of the Center for Research in Human Development and Education (CRHDE) at Temple University, Pennsylvania. She serves as Executive Director of the Mid-Atlantic Laboratory for Student Success and the National Center on Education in the Inner Cities. Dr. Wang is recognized nationally and internationally for her research on early childhood education, learner differences and effective school responses to student diversity; student motivation; and implementation and evaluation of comprehensive approaches to urban education reform. She serves on numerous boards and professional organizations. In 1998, Dr. Wang was elected a member of the International Academy of Education.

APPENDIX C:
FRENCH-AMERICAN FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND PROJECT STAFF

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Additional publications in this series available through the French-American Foundation:

A Welcome For Every Child I:
How France Achieves Quality in Child Care
(1989)

A Welcome For Every Child II:
How France Protects Maternal and Child Health
(1994)

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